

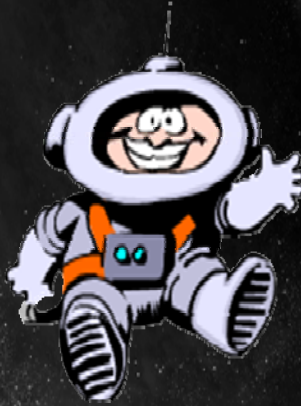


Zaid Ali Alsagoff



Galaxies

6



69

Adventures

<http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/>



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

I would like to express my gratitude to all those that have inspired me directly and indirectly during my one year exploration into learning using a blog entitled 'ZaidLearn' to write about it.

Firstly, I am truly *grateful for being a Muslim and thank ALLAH (God)* for all the wonderful things I experience every single day. Although, I might grumble now and then, life itself is truly a great miracle. The little and big wonders of the world and Universe are breathtaking when we open our eyes and hearts to explore them. Just looking at a tiny little ant with open eyes can give learning goose bumps.

Secondly, I am truly *grateful for having an amazing wife and two wonderful kids* that give me joy, happiness, pleasure (and headaches) every single day. I simply don't know what I would do without them. Also, the rest of my immediate and extended family have played a crucial role in inspiring and guiding me forward to where I am today.

Thirdly, I would like to express my gratitude to a bunch of great contemporary thinkers in the field of learning that I have managed to have a learning conversation with either virtually or face-to-face during this last year. They include *Stephen Downes, Joseph Hart, Clayton Wright, Jeff Cobb, Thomas Hanson, Elliott Masie, Clive Shepherd, Patricia Donaghy, Bryan Chapman, Tom Kuhlmann, Jane Knight, Graham Glass, Abtar Kaur, Zoraini Wati Abas and Rozhan Idrus*. Their wise words and advice have done wonders to my learning while I wonder.

Finally, I do hope that whatever I have learned and shared here can benefit others out there one way or the other :)

# READING TIPS!

1. Don't Read A-Z!
2. Scan Contents!
3. Ignore Rubbish!
4. Zoom In!
5. Find It?
6. Click 'Article URL'!
7. Then Read!
8. Explore the Resources!
9. Reflect Your Learning!
10. Let's Reflect Together!





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## ABOUT THIS EBOOK

At the beginning of 2007, I sat down to have a discussion with myself about what I wanted to achieve (working and academic wise) by the end of 2008. By the end of this self-reflective discussion I had managed to draft two hedgehog goals to achieve. The first hedgehog goal was to write a book about learning (by July 2008), and the second one was to start my PhD adventure (by December 2008).

As I was approaching July 2007, I realized that my book and PhD aspirations were getting nowhere. So, to get the ball rolling I started to blog about learning (**ZaidLearn**) on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Since then (until August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008) I have posted exactly 300 articles or learning nuggets on the blog. The first 128 learning nuggets were imported from my past (failed) learning adventures (including an e-Learning Community Portal). In other words, since I started last year I have posted 172 new learning nuggets. The length of each learning nugget has varied from a whopping 5000 words to a few hundred.

Then a couple of weeks ago (July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008), I realized that perhaps it was time to revive at least one of my hedgehog goals for 2008. Although, I had not been writing a book consciously, I had been blogging for one year about learning. After re-exploring my blog I thought, "*Let's redefine my primitive perception of what a book should look like, and create a book (or ebook) out of my posted learning nuggets.*" First, I decided to include all my new learning nuggets (172), but then I realized that the book would evolve into a 500-page monster. Oh man, I used to have a writing phobia when I was a kid, and today I even feel sick if I haven't written something interesting for a day. What a turnaround!

After a lot of filtering, I have settled for **69 learning nuggets** posted on ZaidLearn, which I believe readers might find useful to their own learning. To make it a bit more convenient to find what you are looking for (reading tips on page 3), I have divided the book into six learning galaxies (or themes), which are:

- ☐ **Learning**
- ☐ **Teaching**



- ❑ **Stories**
- ❑ **Free e-Learning Tools**
- ❑ **Free Learning Content**
- ❑ **Free EduGames**

Many of the 69 learning nuggets actually explore several learning galaxies at once, but I have tried to reshuffle them into the most appropriate one. I suppose if we were using tags instead of categories it would be much easier, but that is not easy in a book.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the real learning beauty of this book is the amazing collection of links to great learning resources that you will discover while scanning or reading it. One of the problems with online learning is that some links (URLs) are from time to time updated. However, with a blog or website it is usually easier and faster to update compared to updating and republishing a book. As there are probably more than a thousand juicy links here, I have only made the '**Article URL**' visible for you to click on to access the rest. In other words, this book is a value added extension to the evolving blog, and if you want the updated learning nuggets or resources, the safest thing to do is to use the 'Article URL'.

## 1. SECRETS OF THE SUPER-LEARNERS (GRAIG LAMBART)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/08/secrets-of-super-learners-graig-lambert.html>

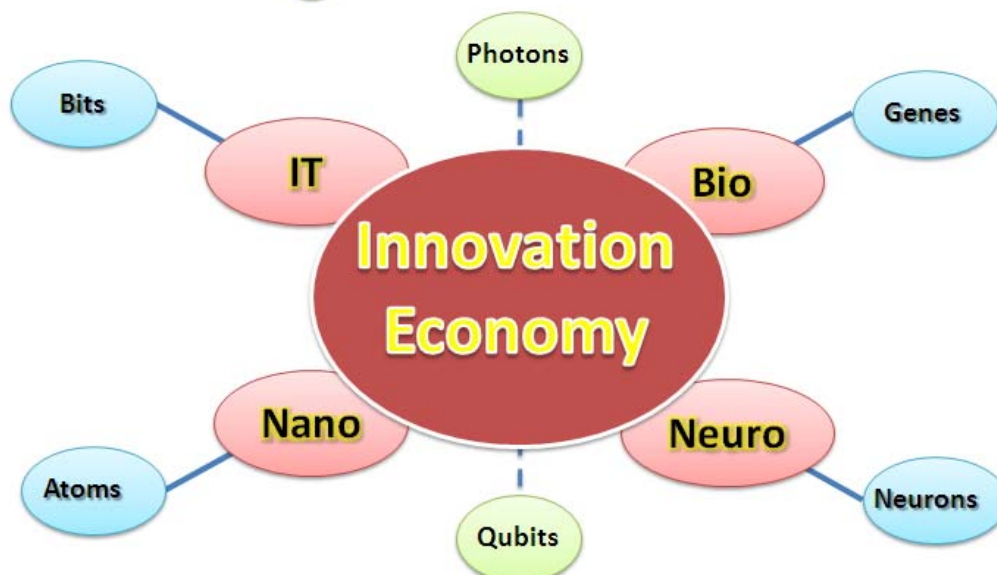
*Example - Article URL*

If you are already a reader of ZaidLearn (blog), I suppose you will notice that my formatting approach in this book is more consistent compared to the blog where I have been experimenting with all sorts of text sizes and colors. One reader actually wrote to me a few months back and told me that he loved my blog, but he got headaches trying to read it. So, hopefully this will not occur in this book.

Finally, have fun learning, and hopefully you will find some interesting learning nuggets here to explore further. Oops, one more thing, I suppose this is still an ebook until it is printed out :)



## Nurturing students for the...?

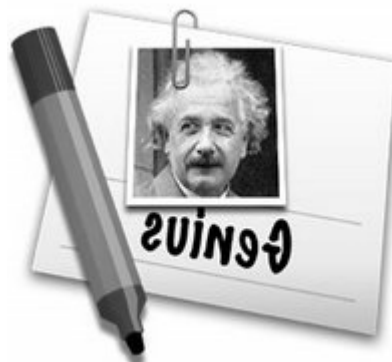


"The Innovation economy is coming. It will bring sweeping global change that affects everyone... **Those who embrace innovation and adapt quickly will win**...The Innovation economy is a revolution in how individuals use ideas, knowledge, and conduct commerce." – *James Canton*

## 1. SECRETS OF THE SUPER-LEARNERS (GRAIG LAMBART)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/08/secrets-of-super-learners-graig-lambert.html>

This article by Craig Lambert discusses some interesting secrets behind the mind of a super learner or what I like to call a potential or evolving genius. Also, to become a great teacher you must first learn the art of learning (or Learning how to learn, unlearn, relearn, etc.), and the more passion you have for learning (and welcome criticism) the more likely you will improve your ability to become a great educator.



**So, what are the secrets of the super-learners** (discussed in the article)?

### ❑ **WONDER**

I remember a friend of mine more than two decades ago used to joke "I am Stevie Wonder and I wonder where I am" (That might sound like an insult to a blind person, but that phrase somehow has been lingering in my thoughts for decades, and perhaps there is a reason for it, or perhaps not.). However, the quality of always being curious and wanting to find out more about something is critical. In other words, one continues to ask questions (Why? How? What? Where? When? Which? Etc.) trying to get a deeper understanding of something (e.g. Life and Death). Interestingly, often when you think you got the answer, you realize that you haven't got it. What do you do? Give up, accept it as it is or continue searching for it?

### ❑ **HUMILITY**

*"One primary trouble with the American educational system is its concern with answers, as opposed to giving students questions",* says C. Roland Christensen. Actually, we should not even give the students the questions, and instead facilitate them to figure out the questions themselves (and guide them if necessary). It might take a longer time (Time Vs Process), but to be a great learner (and teacher) you must master the art of asking questions (zooming in on the root cause, problem, or issue), because you surely do not want to answer correctly to the wrong question. Jorge Domínguez puts



it nicely by saying, *"The student who is a better learner will have a clearer sense of his or her own weaknesses."* James Wilkinson goes on to say that *"good learners know what it is that they don't know, and can ask questions about it."* So, do you show humility and recognize that you are not always right? Or is your ego too big to be wrong? Actually, I should be asking these questions to myself.

❑ **SYNTHETIC THINKING**

*"Super-learners aren't passive; they don't simply absorb information but actively reconstitute it into meaningful patterns"*. Professor Starch emphasizes that *"good learners see the difference between relevant information and irrelevant information"*. Yes, they are also good at distinguishing between facts and opinions, recognizing fallacies, and are good at analytical or critical thinking.

❑ **PATIENCE**

Wilkinson argues that *"there is a myth that good student have photographic memories and don't work hard...actually they are quite hard-working, but don't feel that they have to understand everything the first time through (do not give up until the AHA-moment)."* Although, there is nothing wrong in being impatient to learn, you just got to realize that you sometimes need to be patient to get it right (or reach a deeper level of understanding).

❑ **RELISHING MISTAKES**

*"Good learners make lots of mistakes, just as poor learners do, but they learn from their mistakes."* Have you ever heard the famous or infamous statement *"the secret to my success is failure"*? Actually, if you have not failed during your studies, you simply have not tried hard enough (or "You have no guts!" in plain English). Coming to think of it, the word "Failure" is relative, and has only real meaning when we put criteria to it. In other words, some might scream of joy for a B+ result, while others might want to jump of a building (Disaster!). However, what is important is that the thought of failure should not stop you from trying to reach your targets. As a great Malaysian Army General said recently, "Do it now!" (Which I find more stimulating than Nike's "Just Do It!").

Yes, this article is simply juicy, because it engages my mind to think deeper about what it takes to be a super learner. If we want to become a super teacher, we must first master the art of learning (or at least understand more about ourselves and how we learn). Also, our dear Schools, Colleges and Universities, must not see student failure as a burden, but an opportunity to help students to succeed. *The key is not whether we fail or succeed during our studies, put how much*



*effort and attitude we put into it. If the effort and right attitude is internalized into the students' mind (becomes a habit) during the learning process, he or she will eventually succeed (Trust me!). Hmm, again another funny word ("Succeed" or "Success"), where the criteria I suppose is continuously changing or adjusting (as we succeed). Interestingly, when we meet our initial target, it might feel like failure, because our targets have evolved.*

### **SO, ARE YOU A SUPER-LEARNER?**

Let's end this post with Michelangelo's famous quote "*I AM STILL LEARNING!*" :)

**"The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education."**

*– Albert Einstein*

## 2. E-LEARNING 2.0 IN DEVELOPMENT (STEPHEN DOWNES)

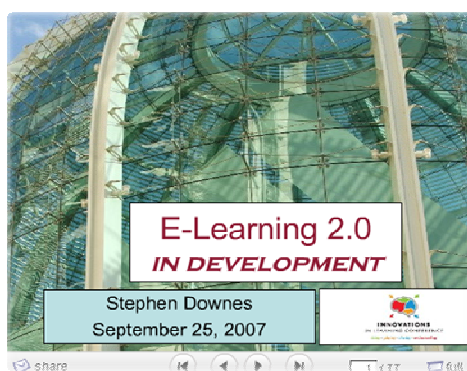
Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/09/e-learning-20-in-development-stephen.html>

### CONFERENCE

"The theme of Brandon hall innovations conference is “**doing**, **playing**, **sharing**, and **understanding**.” they've designed this exciting event to maximize the participants' hands-on experience with innovative tools and technologies and to provide them with a glimpse into the future of learning. You'll leave the conference with actual skills they can apply to advance innovative learning within your organization.....they also abandoned the traditional 'speakers-with-PowerPoint-slides' model at the Brandon hall innovations in learning conference".

### SERIOUS!

Well, that didn't stop Stephen Downes from using PowerPoint slides to share his ideas and reflections, which we now can enjoy and reflect. Yes, also all those participants that were connected online during the actual session (I suppose everyone there!), could access the slides from SlideShare. Again, it just shows that having fixed rules (or barriers) for learning are not very effective with today's disruptive technologies (The only fixed rule should be: Connect and Engage!). Anyway, whatever rules set, here is his presentation slides. Also, watch out for his audio recording (podcast) of this presentation, because you might get confused if you are new to e-learning. I will post it here when available, or perhaps he will pop by to do so (Dreaming?).



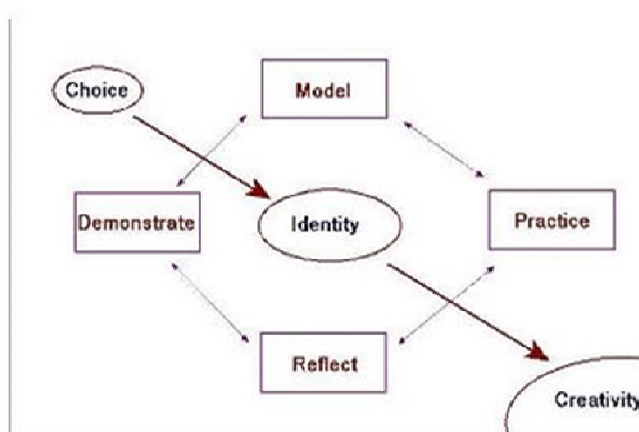
URL: <http://www.slideshare.net/Downes/elearning-20-in-development/>



## REFLECTING E-LEARNING 2.0!

According to Stephen Downes "the idea is that learning is not based on objects and contents that are stored, as though in a library...Rather the idea is that learning is like a utility - like water or electricity - that flows in a network or a grip, that we tap into when we want...The way **NETWORK** learns is the way **PEOPLE** learn...they are both complex systems, and the organization of each depends on connections (Connectivism - George Siemens)."

What is the PLE?

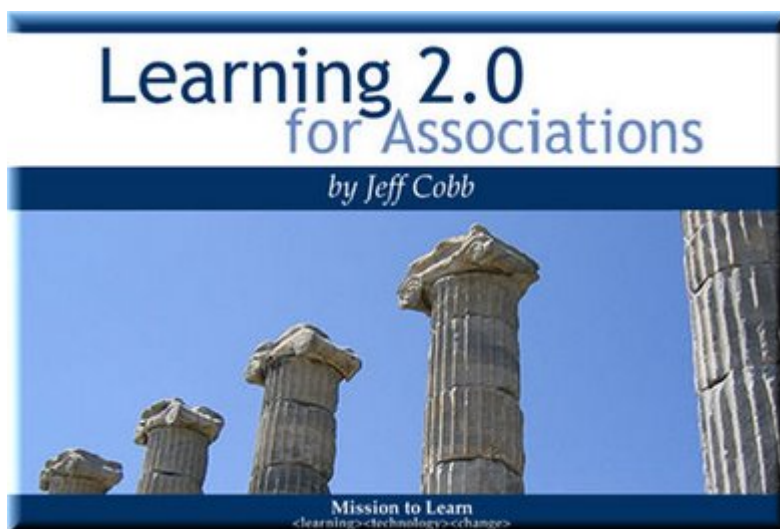


Then he goes on to talk about being learning centered (learning is owned by the learner), immersive learning, connect learning, game-based learning, workflow learning, mobile learning, and finally explores Personal Learning Environments (PLE) in details. I especially, like his simple description of PLE involving four (4) steps or pieces (again and again): **Demonstrate-Model-Practice-Reflect**, and he ends up discussing the **Choice-Identity-Creativity issue**, where learners are provided with simulated or actual learning events to facilitate their learning and creativity (If you are lost check slide 71 and onwards). Yes, he puts it nicely by emphasizing on learning ownership, "People talk about 'motivation' - but the real issue is **OWNERSHIP**."

Since my reflections are based only on the slides shared by Stephen, I might have gotten it creatively wrong, though! However, to sum up I believe we need to empower learners (and educators) with more dynamic and easy-to-use tools to share/discuss/collaborate/reflect learning experiences, and engage in learning networks to nurture new ideas, contents, products, services, and things. In short, we all need to take ownership of our own learning :)

### 3. LEARNING 2.0 EBOOK - FREE TO LEARN! (JEFF COBB)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/learning-20-ebook-free-to-learn-jeff.html>



#### LEARNING 2.0 eBook

"This report considers *how approaches to learning have evolved and what impact the new technologies dubbed "Web 2.0" are having.* In it you will find examples of ways in which associations are using these new technologies and what possibilities they may represent for your organization's professional development and other learning initiatives (page 4)."

This Learning 2.0 eBook by Jeff Cobb was first published on February 1, 2008. And thanks to the speed of [word-of-blog](#) it has already received a lot of deserved attention in the messy informal global learning network and people that follow it. I also hope that this juicy Learning 2.0 eBook is increasingly brought to attention, promoted, discussed and reflected in the formal education communities around the world (from primary to tertiary education!).

#### WHY?

Jeff Cobb's Learning 2.0 eBook makes it easy for anyone to learn the basics about Learning 2.0, or how learning approaches are evolving much thanks to the learning possibilities empowered by new and



Jeff Thomas Cobb



innovative learning tools increasingly being made available online (mostly for free!).

What I really like about this eBook is that it keeps it simple and clear (although 116 pages!), and at the same time is informative and stimulating with catchy graphics and illustrations. In terms of this eBook's nicely chunked and attractive design, we have to give due recognition, appreciation and credit to the editor *Celisa Steele* (page 115 for details), who has done a splendid job!

In addition to making it easy for us to discover and learn about learning tools such as wikis, blogs, virtual worlds, social bookmarking, slide sharing, etc., this eBook also shares with us possibilities on how we can utilize these tools to facilitate the learning process (in a simple and useful manner!).

However, anyone wanting to explore Learning 2.0 (or web 2.0 tools) might get overwhelmed with all the learning possibilities, and the thousands of possible learning tools to explore and use. Here Jeff's eBook comes to the rescue with its own useful non-comprehensive list of commonly used learning tools (page 75 and onwards), which could be a good starting point, before exploring [Go2Web20.net](http://Go2Web20.net) to pick up some new tools at random.



### GO2WEB20.net

[Go2Web20.net](http://Go2Web20.net) is a directory (birth- mid 2006) of web 2.0 applications and services, and currently has a searchable index of more than 2000 tools (logos), which is designed in a creative and



flashy way. It blends Flash and AJAX technologies to produce a directory that is really cool and stylish, and useful if you have broadband. Alright it is updated, but I got to say I really don't like to wait, and if you don't have broadband or a good Internet access, this directory is a really frustrating wait as the services are being loaded. It certainly fails the speed test, but then again it contains an amazing list of learning tools, so I suppose we can wait while its' Web 2.0 services are loading. A simple text-based index of learning tools would do wonders, too! Have both and you have my vote of support! Oops, here is a good example: [Web 2.0 Links List of Web 2.0 Applications](#).

In general, I would actually recommend visiting [Jane Knight's amazing learning tools directory](#) (2000+ learning tools!) instead, which is more informative and useful, and faster to access (than [Go2Web20.net](#)).

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

*"Explore and experiment—try out a variety of tools, and use the tools themselves to capture your learning. But keep your context in mind (page 72)."*

In short, you need to 'Get Your Hands Dirty' and explore some of these new learning approaches and tools. In addition to eating an apple a day to keep the doctor away, perhaps we should also explore a new learning tool (or approach) a day to engage our learners to learn :)

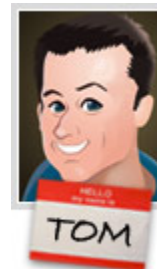
"Imagination is more important than  
knowledge."

– Albert Einstein

## 4. THE RAPID E-LEARNING BLOG (PRACTICAL & FUN!)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/09/rapid-e-learning-blog-practical-fun.html>

"The rapid e-learning blog shares practical tips and tricks to help you become a rapid e-learning pro. It is hosted by Tom Kuhlmann who has over 15 years of hands-on experience in the training industry and currently runs the community at Articulate."



- [Rapid E-Learning 101](#) - Rapid e-learning is about getting the right information to people at the right time. It's more than the tools. It's about empowering people with the knowledge that they need to operate at the speed of business. This 7-part series brings you up-to-speed with some basic ideas about rapid e-learning and how to get your project off the ground.
- [5 Myths About Rapid E-Learning](#) - This 5-part series explores common misconceptions about rapid e-learning development and discuss ways that rapid e-learning can help you do a great job and get the results you want.

**Tom Kuhlmann's** Rapid E-Learning Blog is a wonderful place to learn the art of developing rapid e-learning content (or at least the basics!), especially if you are using Microsoft Office and Articulate tools (What a surprise!). Even if you are not using these tools, it provides tremendous value from an instructional design point-of-view, too. Also, please do not forget to download the free 46-page e-book (need to subscribe) from the blog entitled ***The Insider's Guide to Becoming a Rapid E-Learning Pro.***



Yeah, I had fun learning how to become more creative with Clipart using the "Grouping" features in PowerPoint (Check out below something I did within a few minutes of exploration!). For those of you not familiar or good with tools like Photoshop and Illustrator (I have to admit I am one of them!), PowerPoint is also a quite dynamic tool for graphic creation, meshing, mixing, etc (Coming to think of it, even the banner on my blog was developed using PowerPoint!).





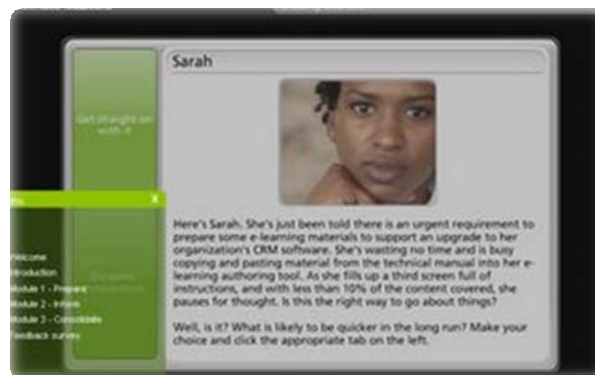
In short, this Rapid E-Learning Blog is certainly a place for our 'Favorites', and I know I will be busy this weekend getting myself self-certified with Tom's [Rapid E-Learning 101](#) course :)

“Anyone who stops learning is old,  
whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone  
who keeps learning stays young.”

- Henry Ford

## 5. 60-MINUTE MASTERS ON RAPID E-LEARNING DESIGN & KINEO MAGIC!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/60-minute-masters-on-rapid-e-learning.html>



### 60 MINUTE MASTERS?

Kineo has collaborated with [Clive Shepherd](#) and [InVision Learning](#) to create **a short course on rapid e-learning design**. Entitled '[60 Minute Masters](#)', the course provides subject experts and many others with the skills needed to design engaging, rapid e-learning materials for use in the workplace. The course is free. All you need to do is register. The course was showcased at the [Devlearn conference](#) in San Jose (Nov 5-8, 2007). The course was developed in a few short weeks (within the 21-day benchmark?), using the articulate authoring tool (Commercial tool!) , and is hosted in a Kineo LMS powered by [Moodle](#), the open source LMS [...more](#)

*Secret rapid e-learning recipe?* Blending great educators with easy-to-use commercial and open source tools to design effective and engaging courses efficiently!

### JUICE!

I discovered this wonderful learning juice after exploring [Helge Scherlund's excellent e-Learning news blog](#) (Yes, if you are looking for e-learning juice, I would rather go there than here!). First, I suppose you will have fun swimming through the [Articulate Presentation - 60 Minutes Masters](#) (74 slides or pages!). Though, I have no idea why they are linking us to non-audio version for the audio version. However, they do hint that we should register for the [60 Minute Masters](#) course, which I did. Hmm, I still seem to get the non-audio version. So, where can we get the audio version, too? I suppose they will make it available soon.



Interestingly, the first example of the [30-Minute Masters](#) ... has been re-branded as the existing '60 Minute Masters' course, because the way the script turned out 30 minutes was never going to be enough ([Source](#))! I suppose they might discover soon that perhaps 90 minutes would be sufficient to master this course, and another 1-3 months of practice to master the art of rapid e-learning design. In short, you need to Practice, Practice, and Practice!

In addition to this interactive articulate presentation, the course (hosted by Moodle) also provides you with some juicy rapid e-learning reports, and some useful e-learning examples constructed using different rapid e-learning tools such as Articulate Engage, Raptivity (Interview Simulation) eXe Open Source Authoring Tool, and RapideL. Also, you can listen to a few short podcasts from experts such as Jane Knight. Finally, there is also a community area that includes a chat room, discussion forum, and a wiki (Not much activity there yet. Coming soon!



#### KINEO MAGIC

As always, I usually discover the juiciest stuff when I go digging a bit deeper into an issue or site (by accident I mean!). Alright, I have already posted some great juice from Kineo (links above), but now I have discovered a whole lot more. Here are some more learning juices to engage our minds with:

- ❑ [Rapid E-Learning](#) - Just check it out!
- ❑ [Kineo Knowledge](#) - This section is simply a gold mine. Examples: [Rapid E-learning Authoring Tool Reviews](#) and [Kineo Book reviews](#).
- ❑ [Open Source Tools](#) - This section provides free overviews of the latest and best open source tools and content that you can use to develop and deliver your e-learning; and other web projects. Example: [50 Ideas for Free E-learning](#) (PDF).
- ❑ [Kineo Free Reports](#) - Kineo Reports (mostly in PDF format) are designed to provide you with the practical support you need to improve performance through blended and e-learning. A few juicy examples:
  - ❑ [How to Design Rapid E-learning](#) - Stephen Walsh explains how rapid e-learning design is different -- and better -- than traditional methods.
  - ❑ [Sustaining performance in rapid e-learning](#) - A free guide on how to ensure your learners get the best from rapid e-learning.



- ❑ [E-Learning 2.0](#) - Steve Rayson explores the development of E-learning 2.0 and what it all means.
- ❑ [Rapid E-learning Overview](#) - Matt Fox explores the Rapid E-learning phenomenon.
- ❑ [13 Ways to Manage Informal Learning](#) - 13 ways to help facilitate what may account for 80% of your organization's learning.

Overall, I believe this is only the tip of the iceberg of Kineo's wonderful arsenal of learning resources, and perhaps we should explore this site further to discover more amazing learning treasures.

In addition, Kineo is of course promoting its consultancy services, but if you can't afford it, why not at least enjoy their free learning resources. Finally, [Kineo's super team of experts](#) deserves a lot of credit for making all this juice available to us. Thanks and please keep it up! We are certainly hungry for more great learning juice from Kineo :)

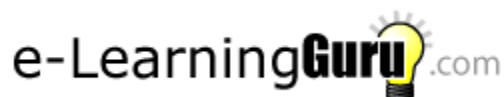
"The only real valuable thing is  
intuition."

– Albert Einstein



## 6. GREAT E-LEARNING BOOKS SUMMARIZED (E-LEARNINGGURU)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/10/great-e-learning-books-summarized-e.html>



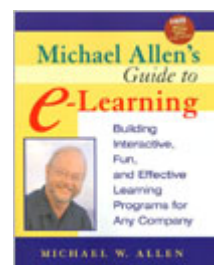
### E-LEARNINGGURU

e-LearningGuru.com (<http://www.e-learningguru.com/>) was founded by [Kevin Kruse](#). He started this site as a way to **offer the e-learning community practical information in a plain-language format**. This amazing site has evolved into a free e-learning portal (No.1 according to the site!) serving more than 40,000 professionals each month, and is today peppered with articles, white papers, interviews, book summaries and links to the best sites on the 'net.

### JUICE

As mentioned above, the e-LearningGuru site is peppered with juice, so it is difficult to hit the bulls' eye or extract the core juice. However, in this post I want to share with you the a list of **5-minute summaries of great e-learning books** (If you are a slow reader, or want to spend some time reflecting while reading, it should probably take you around 10-30 minutes per book summary). Currently, you can find the following book summaries on the site (All in PDF format):

- ❑ [Beyond E-Learning: Approaches and Technologies to Enhance Organizational Knowledge, Learning, and Performance](#) - Marc Rosenberg
- ❑ [E-Learning Solutions on a Shoestring : Help for the Chronically Underfunded](#) - Jane Bozarth
- ❑ [Got Game: How the Gamer Generation Is Reshaping Business Forever](#) - John C. Beck & Mitchell Wade
- ❑ [Michael Allen's Guide to E-Learning](#) - Michael Allen
- ❑ [Renaissance eLearning](#) - Samantha Chapnic and Jimm Meloy
- ❑ [e-Learning and the Science of Instruction](#) - Ruth Colvin Clark and Richard Mayer
- ❑ [Getting the Most from Online Learning](#) - George Piskurich





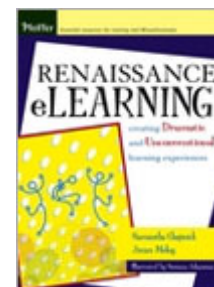


- ❑ [Learning by Doing: A Comprehensive Guide to Simulations, Computer Games, and Pedagogy in e-Learning and Other Educational Experiences](#) - Clark Aldrich
- ❑ [The Business Case for E-Learning](#) - Tom Kelly and Nader Nanjiani
- ❑ [Winning E-Learning Proposals: The Art of Design and Development](#) - Karl Kapp, Ed.D.
- ❑ [Selling E-Learning](#) - Darin Hartley
- ❑ [Leading E-Learning](#) - William Horton

## REFLECTION!

Ironically, based on my observation and experience ***we still seem to love learning about e-learning reading the good old hard copy paper versions.***

I mean who would want to read about e-learning through an e-book? Personally, I prefer reading articles online (below 15 pages!), but when it comes to books the traditional paper version still works best for me. I suppose when the future technology becomes easier-to-use, faster and more comfortable and soothing to our eyes, we will read more books in some form of e-format (electronic paper?).



Book summaries in general are ***useful when you want to easily and quickly access the core message or essence of what the book is about.*** Especially, if you have read many books in a particular field, such book summaries are great, because you can use your existing knowledge and experiences to decipher and understand. Also, these book summaries can give us an idea whether we should invest our time and money to read the full version. However, if you are new to a particular field (and old I suppose!) book summaries might give you a shallow understanding (or none at all!) of the real objectives of the book. Also, book summaries usually do not cover the juicy stories (or case studies) discussed, and instead focuses more on the core concepts, principles, facts, processes and practices.

In a way, we humans are ***genetically and socially encoded to learn more effectively from stories.*** We have been learning from stories ever since our parents began reading to us baby books (or ever since Adam and Eve!). Put it another way, what do you remember from a course one year (or more) after taking it? Or what do you remember from your student learning days (School, College, and University!) ? I suppose what we learn is stored somewhere in our great brain, but the things that we can easily retrieve without much effort are often related to memorable and meaningful stories.



I suppose if we embed or relate stories (emotional component) to what we are teaching/facilitating (logical component) it will have a more effective learning outcome. Add practice, feedback, discussion and reflection, and we seem to have a great model to effectively engage and learn. Hmm, back to book summaries! Alright, what I am trying to say is that ***book summaries are useful, but they could become even more useful if they also summarize or select a few juicy stories from the book, and relate it to the key points or contents.***

A book summary with a few related juicy stories would probably evolve into a 10-minute learning adventure, but it just might captivate our minds more and last in our memory for a life time :)

"Anyone who has never made a mistake  
has never tried anything new."

– Albert Einstein

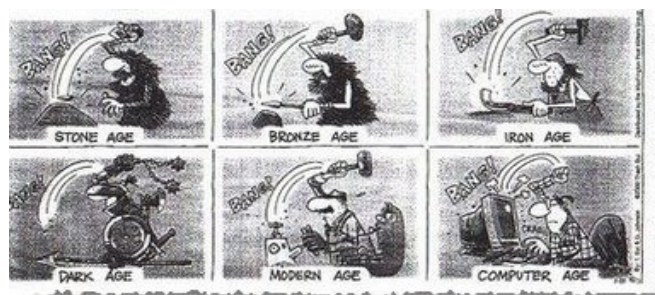
## 7. ELEARNING .....? I'VE HAD E-NOUGH!! (ROZHAN IDRUS)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/elearning-ive-had-e-nough-rozhan-idrus.html>



### NEW BLOG!

"I can't stand it anymore .. I have to do this. Call me what you like .. But looks like I have to jump on the bandwagon as well ... so here goes **another blog about e-learning** ..My version, of course... Sometimes I find it absolutely comical when I hear people complaining about the 'quality' of education on the Internet, when no one ever bothered to scrutinize the 'quality' of face to face teaching .. We are so bothered whether students actually log online to view our notes when we don't even recognize the 200-odd students in our lecture (face to face) ... such dichotomy .. The funniest thing is that .. ***It is as though there is someone else to be blamed*** for what is not working with e-learning or whatever learning you care to mention!! Who is to be blamed ?? ***If a lecture is boring*** - who made it boring?? If a lecture or teaching experience is captivation, who made it so?? **YOU!!**"





## THE ART OF LEARNING!

Anyone who has witnessed one of Prof. Rozhan M. Idrus talks, had discussions with him, or read his articles and papers, would have surely enjoyed his unique style of making sense using humor, illustrations, cartoons (like the one above!), striking examples, and mind stimulating reflections and thoughts. Yes, he has this great ability to stimulate both the cognitive and affective mind when making a point.

I suppose his 22 years experience in distance learning, and his background in instructional design has powered him with a few tricks and stories to strike a point, and facilitate effective learning.

Yeah, he is also the mastermind behind [Technogogy](#), which is currently defined as "the convergence of technology, pedagogy and content in the transformative use of technology to foster learning."

It will be interesting to see how Rozhan's new e-Learning blog evolves. The only thing to worry about is his amazing '**right brain**' *habit* of easily getting bored and too-many-tasking (Been there, done that!), and then suddenly moving on to a new learning adventure (and galaxy!). However, I believe he has hit a juicy learning nail with this blog (including the title!), and it will hopefully inspire him to continue to share his vast experience in distance learning, e-learning and education.

Yeah, wherever this BROTHER is reflecting and sharing his learning ideas and experiences, I will also be eagerly following, reading, reflecting and learning. Hopefully, in the future we can meet more often and have virtual and face-to-face tea-break discussions. Oh, I forgot I don't drink tea! I suppose I will drink pure water to clear my mind, so that I can absorb and reflect his ramblings of learning wisdom :)

"He who opens a school door,  
closes a prison."

*-Victor Hugo*

## 8. 10 TOP ETL BLOGS YOU SIMPLY DON'T WANT TO MISS!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/10-top-etl-blogs-you-simply-dont-want.html>



### WHAT?

As we are approaching closer to 2008, we will increasingly see all sorts of Top 8, Top 10, Top 20, Top 100, etc. lists, ranking everything from underwear to blogs. ***Should we take these kind of rankings seriously?*** No idea! It really depends (on the criteria and who's involved!), but surely if the ranking is done by someone or a group (Wisdom of the crowds!) that is influential, recognized, an expert, popular, respected, and/or widely read, it will have some impact on what we are doing (increased online traffic, global awareness, ego boosting, increased effort, etc.). Whatever it is, we somehow often get an extra kick out of reading this TOP something stuff. Better yet, if we are ourselves mentioned (or top of the pops!), life suddenly shines a bit brighter for a while ([Jeff Cobb](#), thanks for mentioning my blog!). It feels great, Hip-Hip-Hurray! Yippy Kay Yaw Yeah!

Though, whatever recognition, awards or top rankings we get, *hopefully it does not change our attitude to learn*. In other words, recognition, awards, and rankings, should only increase our efforts/hunger to learn :)



## MY TOP 10 ETL BLOGS!

Although, I am not really known (yet!), or an influential person in education, I am going to share with you my top 10 (favorite) **ETL** (**E**ducation + **T**echnology = **L**earning) blogs that takes up my time, as I struggle to learn more about education, learning technologies, and importantly the art of '*Learning How to Learn*' more effectively. My ranking uses no particular formula, so please do not get offended if you are not on the list (or lower than expected!). This top 10 list is simply ETL blogs that occupy my interest and time. So, I suppose the time and interest factors play important roles in my ranking. Not sure really! Probably, my humble common sense and gut-feeling plays a prominent role, too. Stop! Here is my top 10 favorite ETL blogs:

1. [Stephen's Web - OLDaily](#)

If you are looking for ETL-related news, trends, reflections, etc., Stephen Downes's OLDaily is a homerun (Actually a season full of homeruns!). I have yet to find a better ETL blog out there in the blogosphere! Stephen's short reflections to all the juice he daily (5 times a week!) extracts from his intelligent surveillance of hundreds of ETL blogs (400+, if I am not mistaken!) are enjoyable, useful, relevant, and contains a lot of wisdom (to my humble knowledge!). Though, since he posts so often, you might sometimes miss the really juicy stuff (unless you have a lot of time!). Also, he posts links (URLs) to all his talks, presentations, and reflections (even from his office or bedroom. Not sure where! Better ask him!) on his blog, which often includes audio and/or video recordings, too. These learning resources enable us to get a deeper understanding of his thinking and ideas about learning and education. In short, we can in a way experience his learning journey (process) on '*Learning How to Learn*' more effectively, as he learns. [Click here](#) to learn more about Stephen.

2. [EduResources Weblog](#)

Joseph Hart's regular posts on mostly Higher education online resource discoveries accompanied by short but valuable reflections, is something you simply don't want to miss, especially if you are an educator. His blog might not be as flashy as some of the other ETL Blogs, but his valuable words and wise reflections are engaging, relevant, and useful to our learning mind. Also, check out his other great blog [The Open Learner](#), which explores the usage of open knowledge resources across a diversity of subjects, levels, and interests for a wide range of learners and learning communities.





3. [elearnspace](#)

George Siemens's elearnspace ([Check out the Homepage, too!](#)) is a great ETL blog to keep yourself updated about the latest juice in e-learning, knowledge management, networks, technology, community development, and corporate learning. Also, check out his [Knowing Knowledge](#) book (Free!), which reflects the future of knowledge and learning. What I really like about this guy, is that he is always up to something innovative and is not scared to fail (e.g. '[Corporate Learning: Trends and Innovations](#)' Free Online Conference).

4. [Jane's E-Learning Pick of the Day](#)

If you are looking for the latest e-learning (or 'learning') tools, Jane Knight's blog is simply 'Toolicious'! Also, check out [Jane Knight's amazing directory of 1800+ learning tools](#). In addition, I love the fact that she provides us with a weekly round-up of the new learning tools added to the tools directory. Her blog posts are concise, attractive, and juicy. Hmm, got a lot to learn here!!!!

5. [Learning Trends](#)

Elliott Masie's Learning Trends blog is my favorite corporate learning blog. He himself is a dynamic, creative and innovative guy always looking for new ways to connect, contextualize, and innovate the learning process, so I would not want to miss his reflections. If you aren't already subscribing to his Learning Trends, perhaps it is time!

6. [The Rapid eLearning Blog](#)

When you think about improving your rapid e-Learning, instructional design, PowerPoint or graphic creation skills, Tom Kuhlmann's Rapid eLearning blog provides you with a lot of great advice, tips, examples and short-cuts (One word = Amazing!). Also, don't forget to get his [free elearning ebook](#) while you're there. In short, this blog is my favorite 'Rapid e-Learning' learning blog!

7. [Clive on Learning](#)

If you are looking for reflections from an experienced expert on instructional design and insights on educational trends, I believe Clive Shepherd's excellent blog will nourish you well. He is also the man behind the [30-minute](#) and [60-minute](#) Masters in Instructional Design (or rapid e-learning design). Also, check out [Clive's 33 Columns](#)! Although, he



does not post as often as some of the other super ETL bloggers, his reflections and insights into education, instructional design, online learning, etc. is worth the wait.

8. [Open Culture](#)

Open Culture led by Dan Colman, is a super blog exploring cultural and educational media (podcasts, videos, online courses, etc.) that's freely available on the web, and that makes learning dynamic, productive, and fun. In addition, you should explore [Open Culture's excellent podcast library](#), too.

9. [Helge Scherlund's eLearning News Blog](#)

If you are looking for an excellent ETL news blog, Helge Scherlund's blog is a really active one discovering a lot of wonderful learning juice. Coming to think of it, this blog is nearly as active as Stephen Downes's OLDaily in updating readers about ETL stuff going on around the world (especially in Europe and Denmark!). The only reason, I have not ranked this blog higher, is because it does not seem to do much more than sharing great discoveries in an attractive and engaging way. I suppose, when I can learn more from Helge Scherlund's own learning reflections and thoughts, I will spend even more time engaging in this excellent and useful ETL news blog.

10. [Online Learning Update](#)

[Ray Schroeder](#)'s Online learning blog is a great learning place to discover e-learning articles and news around the world (Europe, Middle-East, Asia, Australia, US, Canada, Africa, etc.). Also, check out his [Educational Technology](#) blog, too. Actually, I would have ranked [Ray Schroeder](#)'s blogs higher if he had included more of his own reflections embedded with all these wonderful ETL discoveries. But, if you are simply looking for up-to-date news about e-learning and learning technologies, this is an amazing treasure with hundreds of posts.

In addition to these 10 great ETL blogs, the rest of the ETL bloggers that I have identified (or links) on my '**Gurus**' list (right-side of my blog) do occupy my learning time, including [Jay Cross](#), [Patricia Donaghy](#), [Jeff Cobb](#), [Gabe Anderson](#), [Wesley Fryer](#), [Tony Karrer](#), and [Robin Good](#). However, it would also be nice to add at least one Malaysian or Singaporean ETL blogger (that writes in English!) to my learning time, but at the moment I am still searching for one that really excites my learning mind. Got any suggestions? I apologize for my learning ignorance.

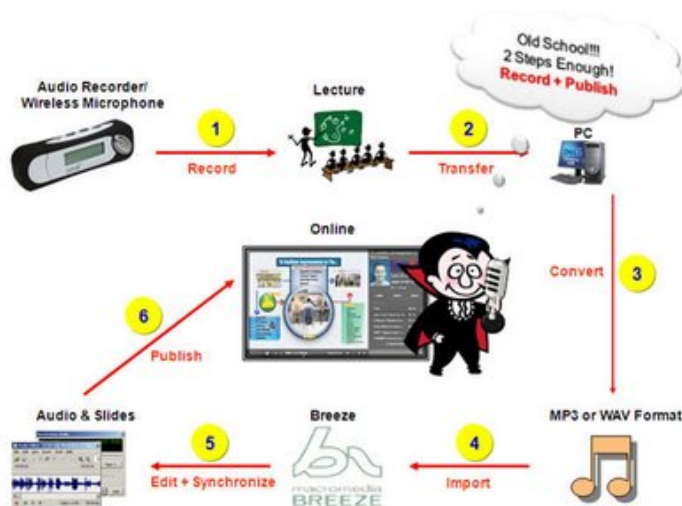
Wherever we go now or in the future, one thing will probably remain the same - **Sharing Knowledge and Ideas is Power (Collective Wisdom!)**. If we don't practice this within our own community, group, or even to ourselves, we will certainly have problems adapting to today's fast evolving global economy driven increasingly by Creativity and Innovation through collective wisdom :)



“He who asks a question may be a fool for five minutes. But he who never asks a question remains a fool forever.”  
- Tom J. Connelly

## 9. CRASHING THE WORKSHOP TO CAPTURE A GREAT LEARNING MOMENT!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/03/crashing-workshop-to-capture-great.html>



"In one session, Zaid himself shared that he **recorded** one session of a professor (if I can remember correctly), **just the voice and then he added a PowerPoint presentation** of the talk which I thought was brilliant and at no extra cost." - [Christopher Chew](#)

Sometimes in life you need to be reminded indirectly by others that you have an interesting story to share (on your blog). Thanks to Christopher, I have one (I think)! Let's try to recap what really happened (True story!)...

Once upon a time (August 2005), UNITAR was conducting a facilitation workshop for their academic staff, and I was not officially invited. Did that stop me from crashing the workshop?

### NOT INVITED!

Although, I was not an academic, I had great interest in attending this event to learn and get some more ideas on a special project I was working on. At that time I was preparing a proposal on how we could improve our existing teaching and learning approach. Since a few of UNITAR's great educators were also giving talks on how UNITAR should move forward, attending this workshop made a whole lot of sense!





prepare any PowerPoint slides, while the other three (3) did. And anyone who knows Prof. Bajunid knows he will switch on his multiple thinking processor and wonder into multiple dimensions while giving a talk, shooting nuggets of wisdom here and there. I suppose more structured thinkers might find that very annoying, but I am not one of them.

So, for the other three (3) speakers it was simply to beef up their slides a bit, and then synchronize the audio (and delete a few 'ahs' and 'ums' in the audio editor in Breeze) with the slides, and voila we had three Breeze presentations.

However, for Professor Bajunid's talk it was a bit more complicated since I did not have any slides to refer to. So, I had to listen to his great but wondering talk (a few times!) and cook up a few slides to visualize and chunk it. [Click here](#) to know what I am talking about.

### PERMISSION & FEEDBACK

After completing my little experiment, I shared what I did with all the four speakers, and they were all surprised and happy about it. Interestingly, one of them discovered (**speech therapy!**) that he kept on repeating a particular word (I think it was 'Right') a lot of times during his 30 minute speech, which he asked me to take out. I did (easy with the audio editor) and discovered that he was right! He managed to say 'Right' more than 60 times in 30 minutes.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Alright, with today's technologies you can actually record a lecture (audio/video) and synchronize the slides on-the-fly, which is kind of cool. But for compression/downloading/streaming sake, if all you see is a talking head, you might want to consider simply having a picture of the speaker. Also, a bit of editing might be useful, especially if the lecturer visits the toilet frequently.

If you can't afford commercial tools like Adobe Presenter or Articulate, you could for example use a free tool such as [Slideshare](#), which allows you to add audio, too.

Whatever tool you use, what is important is to **capture great learning events** such as Professor Bajunid's talk about teaching and learning, and **make it conveniently available to anyone around the world** (*compressed, chunked, engaging and juicy!*). Although, Professor Bajunid is no longer with UNITAR (neither am I!), I do hope that UNITAR continue to make his presentation available to mankind (at least for their own branding sake!).



If you ask me (who are you!), this talk is a treasure that can engage our learning minds for another century (at least a decade!). Hmm, I do apologize for some of the grammar bloopers in the slides, but who cares when Professor Bajunid engages your mind to think.

"...**Lecturers who know nothing else except their PowerPoint slides**...They are just PowerPoint notes, not process. They have no stories, no biographies, no histories..."

- Professor Bajunid

If you are wondering what this means, [click here](#) :)

"By learning you will teach;  
by teaching you will understand."

- Latin Proverb





## 10. ZAIDLEARN REFLECTS BLOGGING AND 2008!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/12/zaidlearn-reflects-blogging-and-2008.html>

### BLOGGING

Why did I get into blogging in the first place? I want to be famous! LOL! Actually, I realized that hardly anyone in my profession (e-learning, learning and education) knows that I exist, and after blogging for 6 months I suppose it is slightly better. Alright, here are the three (3) main reasons (including the above one!) why I started blogging:

- ❑ **Connect, learn from, and communicate with some of the great thinkers on online education today.** By sharing my ideas and thoughts through tools like blogs is a great way to start the conversation (and perhaps also get a bit of recognition, appreciation and respect!). Let's face it, many of the great online education thinkers of today have their own blog(s). I suppose if they don't, I probably would not know who they are, except perhaps those I meet (not many!), or from reading their papers and books here and there.
- ❑ **Nurture my *knowledge sharing mind*, and make it a habit!** I come across a lot of juicy resources (not always easy to find!) that I want to share with others, and blogging is a great tool to quickly and easily share resources on-the-fly. Why don't you use [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) instead? I suppose I want to also add my ideas and thoughts to my resource discoveries, and perhaps add a few cool graphics, and personalize and customize my learning environment in a more creative manner, which I didn't find in [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us), or any of the other social bookmarking and resource sharing sites I have discovered.
- ❑ **Construct an *informal and messy learning repository* of all the juicy learning resources (mostly free!) I have discovered during my learning adventures.** If someone should ask what I have learned or read online, I can simply link them to my blog. It is actually a kind of CV keeping track of my favorite resource discoveries (including time trail), and my thoughts and ideas about them. Also, if I discuss with someone about an excellent resource, I don't have to always repeat something I have already posted. I can simply answer: You can find it on my blog. If it is messy, just Google the key word (e.g. Classtools) and 'ZaidLearn' and you are on your way!

**Did I achieve my ultimate objectives?** If the measure was visitors and hits, I suppose I am kind of a failure, if I compare myself to some of the super bloggers out there. I know of bloggers that get more hits in one day, than I have achieved in my lifetime in the blogs sphere. But then again my blog's readability is '[Genius](#)', so unless I change the way I express myself; I will probably appeal only to geniuses in what I post about (Critical thinking loud and clear!). Though, I did get visitors from many interesting parts of the world, much thanks to Google Search, Stephen Downes, Joseph Hart and others that shared some of my posts in their blogs. In the picture below, you can see that most of my visitors (or readers) are from USA, Canada, Europe, India, and obviously Malaysia (where I live).



If we convert those three (3) reasons for blogging into objectives, I suppose I have done alright. I am kind of satisfied with my messy and informal learning repository (Though, still needs tremendous improvement!), which I suppose I use more than anyone out there to recap and reflect what I have learned. My knowledge sharing attitude is becoming a habit, which is something I have actually worked on since 2004. I am feeling some progress here, and if I try any harder I might just get fired :)

What about connecting, learning from, and communicating with some of the great thinkers on online education? Not sure about that one, but I have had some interesting reflections, comments and thoughts by a few [ETL bloggers](#) out there. So, I suppose I have made some impression and certainly learned a bunch from these comments and reflections.

Here are a few comments, reflections and thoughts about my blog or posts:



❑ **Joseph Hart**

"This promising new weblog by Zaid Ali Alsagoff is devoted to open learning resources around the world; Zaid is located in Malaysia. His blog is especially valuable for its extensive listing of links to bloggers who write about eLearning and its multiple links to Learning Tools, eLearning sites, OpenCourseWare sites, University Podcasts, and Learning Repositories..."

❑ **Stephen Downes**

I am proud to say that the first two news items on the widely read OLDaily newsletter on October 16 (2007), were from ZaidLearn. Stephen said, "...I agree with the author (Zaid) that there are "many excellent free online learning resources out there that are not being fully utilized by the global intelligence learning network." But I don't agree that Buffett's talk is one of them - and this illustrates perfectly the folly of trying to plan this or of depending on presumed authority to make the choices for us." I am not sure if that is positive, but I am happy to know that Stephen actually read my two posts, reflected them, and posted his own piece of mind about my opinion, too. It taught me a lesson about expressing opinions appropriately, and of course that Stephen might sometimes actually read my blog. Yes, I remember another OLDaily news item where Stephen said ([Source](#)), "...As Zaid says, "The key is not whether we fail or succeed during our studies, put how much effort and attitude we put into it. If the effort and right attitude is internalized into the students' mind (becomes a habit) during the learning process, he or she will eventually succeed (Trust me!)." So, sometimes we agree, sometimes we don't. But one thing is for sure, I have learned a lot from Stephen virtually; reading his blogs, articles, papers, and watching his videos :)

❑ **Graham Glass**

"...I particularly appreciate his belief that sites like ours are the beginning of a new era in education, where free learning systems, open resources and community involvement will change the way we teach and learn."

❑ **Tom Kuhlmann**

"....If you have your own blog, [do like Zaid did](#). He linked to this series and showed some before and after images. It's also a great way to share your own tips and tricks..."



❑ **Wynn Williamson**

"...Two other excellent, regularly updated and substantive educational blogs are [Oculture](#) and [Zaid Learn](#)."

❑ **Jeff Cobb**

"... [Zaid Ali Alsagoff](#), however, has already [discussed the new OER booklet](#) in a post on Zaidlearn and followed it with [another excellent post on open educational resources](#) earlier this week. This is one of those occasions where I think it is best for me to simply point to the good work of another blogger."

❑ **John Goldsmith**

"...Zaid Ali Alsagoff, another blogger has compiled his [top 10 list](#) of blogs related to online learning. They look pretty good. Most are bloggers that I know and follow but a couple are new. If you are look for a place to start, this list is as good a place as any..."

❑ **Patricia Donaghy**

"...First came across this site thanks to a reference on [Zaid's blog](#), which has lots of other interesting posts regarding free resources."

## 2008?

Actually, I have found blogging quite addictive and I was seriously planning to quit completely, so that I perhaps can achieve my goals for 2008. I simply do not have time to blog 1-3 hours a day (and be mentally exhausted the rest of the day!), five/four days a week. It is affecting my other duties. However, after reflecting a bit, I have also realized that my messy informal learning repository (and reflections!) is actually useful to some, and perhaps if I just discipline (failed today!) my blogging time consumption, and limit it to 30 minutes (maximum) a day (to keep my addiction at bay!), I can still manage to do it.

Also, I hope from 2008 my blog posts will be shorter (1-2 text chunks per resource discovery) and juicier. I hope ZaidLearn will evolve into a quick fire news blog about learning tools, Open Educational Resources (OER), and teaching and learning stuff. A kind of mash-up of [Joseph Hart](#), [Stephen Downes](#), [Jane Knight](#), [Ray Schroeder](#), and [Helge Scherlund](#)'s great news and

resource blogs. Their postings are short, juicy, relevant, and have their own creative touch. I suppose that is the way to go for now, while I try to achieve my main goals in 2008.

Now, that I will have more time, I hope that I can get my PhD started, **produce 8-12 quality articles about something related to learning** (one-a-month!), and collaborate with some great people to nurture amazing learning environments. After getting the chance to watch and communicate with [Bryan Chapman](#), I believe I have the talent, passion and potential to one day become a '**Learning Strategist**' (Just need to get my 'Left Brain' in order, so that I can convince the accountants, investment guys, and CEOs!).

I wonder how many times I have mentioned 'I' in this post! So, I (again!) better soon stop my ramblings, and begin my 2008 learning journey. It hopefully starts with a 'WE'.



In short, Insha-Allah (God Willing) I hope that in 2008, I become a better Muslim, more caring father and loving husband, and **produce at least one great idea related to learning** (in addition to 1000s of bad ones!).

Hmm, for all of you still reading my last ramblings for 2008, *I hope your dreams come true and that you have an outstanding year of learning, collaboration, sharing and caring :)*

**“Nine-tenths of education is  
encouragement.”**

*- Anatole France*

## 11. ZAIDLEARN GOES DEL.ICIO.US & TAKES A BREAK FROM BLOGGING!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/zaidlearn-goes-delicious-takes-break.html>



"...I do believe that Zaid Ali Alsagoff is in the process of firmly establishing himself as the **e-learning curator** of Southeast Asia. His recent [Any Free Hosted CMS or LMS? \(Yes, Obama Says!\)](#) is just one piece of the accumulating evidence...(Source)"

- Jeff Cobb

WOW! My self-actualizing e-Learning curator ego is reaching the top of Mount Everest! Hmm, what is a curator anyway?

### **CURATOR**

"A curator, in a cultural institution context, is a guardian or an overseer. [According to Wikipedia](#), he/she "is a content specialist responsible for an institution's collections and their associated collections catalogs. The object of a curator's concern necessarily involves tangible objects of some sort, whether it be inter alia artwork, collectibles, historic items or scientific collections (Source)."



"Rubel argues that, in order to manage the massive amounts of information now flowing across the Web, the world needs digital curators, ***“people who are selfless and willing to act as sherpas and guides. they’re identifiable subject matter experts who dive through mountains of digital information and distill it down to its most relevant, essential parts*** ([Source](#)).”

I can live with that! But to tell you the truth, if I am really the e-learning curator of Southeast Asia, we are in big trouble! First, most of my readers are not from Southeast Asia, but instead they are from United States, Canada, Europe, India, Australia and a few Brazilians that can't get enough of this blog.

Also, my messy informal learning repository adventure is not exactly the most efficient place to find what you are looking for. I suppose you might discover something juicy here, but it is probably more by accident, or through a Google search, rather than systematically searching ZaidLearn. Nothing wrong with that, But I believe now has come the time that I also embrace my left brain of organization, and by doing so, I will hopefully nurture the whole brain for efficient management of my learning discoveries, which will hopefully lead to more effective learning.

I really appreciate and respect Jeff Cobb's kind reflections, but I still have a 'green mile' to travel, to live up to such a billing effectively. Though, I love the challenge and until other e-Learning curators do show up in Southeast Asia (or is known beyond!), I don't mind taking the lead. So, here is my plan to move on...

### **Del.icio.us**

To be honest, I should have gone [del.icio.us](#) a long time back. Don't ask me why I didn't (Stubborn to unlearn!)? Instead you should explore and enjoy my growing juicy collection of [del.icio.us](#) links (+160 and growing fast!), which will make it easier for readers to enjoy my arsenal of recommended free learning resources and tools. Here are my most prominent [del.icio.us](#) tags:

- ❑ [Favorite Tools](#)
- ❑ [OER](#) (Open Educational Resources)
- ❑ [OCW](#) (OpenCourseWare)
- ❑ [Podcasts](#)
- ❑ [...more](#)





Although, many of my [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) learning resources perhaps should use multiple tags (e.g. MIT OCW, OER, Podcasts, etc.), I have tried as much as possible to use one appropriate tag for each resource, instead of giving them too many tags. I personally don't want to find the same learning resource in every tag (although it might correct!) while looking for stuff. Anyway, I am still learning the art of tagging, and hopefully it will improve as I embrace [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us).

As I have been collecting juicy learning links (URLs) since 2001 (stored all over the place!), I have literally thousands of them to rediscover and add to [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us). So, in the coming weeks I will be busy rediscovering, filtering (out!), and tagging my last seven years of learning, and creating my own little arsenal of [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) learning resources and tools, which we all can enjoy.

### A BREAK FROM BLOGGING

In addition, I have decided to take a break from blogging for at least 2-3 weeks, so I can reflect (in peace!) what I have achieved and prepare for the second phase of ZaidLearn. Second phase?

I suppose anyone that has been reading my blog has probably been overwhelmed with all the learning resources and tools discussed and shared here. And to be honest, I am really getting bored simply talking about new resources and tools discovered, and believe that ZaidLearn needs to move on to focus more on what really matters in education. **EFFECTIVE LEARNING!!!!!!**

### ZAIDLEARN 2.0

In the future, I will still share great resources and tools I discover, but that will [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) take care of from now on. I suppose I will provide a weekly [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) update on the juiciest stuff discovered.



So, what about the 'ZaidLearn' blog? It will go on, but it will from the next post onwards (with the exception of weekly [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) updates) focus on interesting topics and issues in relation to facilitating effective learning online. The posts will be short/long articles (500-2000 words) where I share my research, experiences, thoughts and ideas about learning (like I got much experience to share!). I predict that I will post 2-4 articles a month, meaning this blog will certainly not be as active as before, but it will hopefully be of better quality :).



My secret recipe (no longer!) for writing articles, will be roughly 4 days of research and reflection (in-between formal working activities), and then on the fifth day 1-4 hours of writing and editing, and Voila an article has been posted. I hope by using this formula, I can by year end (2008) compile these articles into an e-Book, which of course will be free to download (if anyone is interested!).

To put more pressure on myself (I love that!), I will challenge myself to write articles that are good enough to be published in the likes of [Tomorrow's Professor Blog](#) (Stanford University) and New York Times (NYT). So, Rick Reis (Editor of Tomorrow's Professor Blog) please consider my articles, although I am no professor (Need another 15 years for that one!). Anyway, all my articles will be published in ZaidLearn, and if they are really good, I am sure they will find their way to other interesting places, except peer reviewed journals. Why? I write with an unhealthy mix of emotion, logic, flavor, disruption and creativity beyond the scientific acceptance level of most peer reviewed journals.

Alright, enough! Have fun exploring my growing compilation of [del.icio.us](#) learning discoveries!

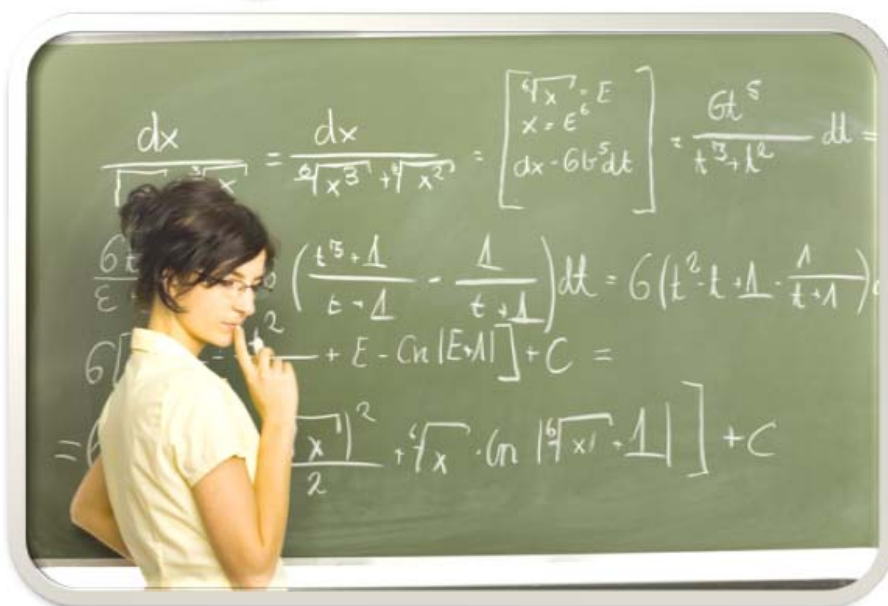
I WILL BE BACK! Soon! That is in 2-3 weeks time :)

**“Whatever you want to teach, be brief.”**

*- Horace*

**GALAXY 2: TEACHING**

## Challenges from a...



...point-of-view.





lecturers on how to teach and facilitate effective learning (which makes perfect sense!). Also, since I had been managing the TSIP program for over six (6) months, the "Critical Thinking" course would be the perfect challenge and opportunity to test all my untested theories and suggestions on effective learning.

In a nutshell, I was asked to *lead and transform the 'Critical Thinking' course*, which is a requirement for all undergraduate students.

### THE UNITAR WAY!

Although, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR) is currently becoming a more conventional University, it used to adopt a blended learning model, which usually included courseware, online forums, online tutorials (OLT), and Face-to-Face (F2F) tutorials. Every course is led by a course leader supported by tutors who facilitate their own sections. The course leader is responsible for guiding the tutors, and preparing the course plan, course materials, assignments, quizzes and exams. In addition, the course leader is responsible for correcting the final exams (40% - 50% of the course assessment evaluation), and giving the students' final grade for all sections. The tutor's role is to communicate with the course leader, facilitate the course for their section(s), and grade the coursework (50% - 60%).

### COURSE REENGINEERING NEEDED?

Based on my initial unscientific findings, students found the course difficult to understand and the overall students' satisfaction rates were lower than in other courses for the undergraduate level. In addition, both students and tutors complained that the lecture notes were not sufficient.

Although, the past course leaders seemed to have done a good job facilitating their own sections, they failed based on my understanding to communicate and facilitate consistent quality to all the sections. Overall, students and tutors seemed frustrated with 'Critical Thinking', and some even questioned the relevance of this course. They argued that this course ***focused too much on theory and memorization***, and failed to actually help students develop fundamental thinking, reasoning and language abilities that are needed for academic success.



Although, UNITAR had developed a reasonably good page tuning critical thinking courseware, the existing curriculum of the critical thinking course seemed to be mostly (80-90%) based on **John Chaffe's famous book** "[Thinking Critically](#)" (6th Edition, 2000). Even the course objectives and topic outline seemed to be paraphrased out of the book. As UNITAR's self-developed courseware was structured very differently from the course outline, it was hardly reflected or used by either the educators, or the students.

So, I began to read John Chaffe's famous book "[Thinking Critically](#)" to get better feel of what the students were learning. Strangely, I kept on falling asleep while reading this book, and although the content is relevant and useful, the writing style and design of that book (I suppose the later versions are more engaging!) did not appeal or inspire my thinking mind. So, if I am falling asleep reading this book, what about the students?

In addition to this book, the course also recommended students to read another book entitled '[Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction](#)' (G. Bassham & Co., 2007). So, I explored the book, and found it more activity-oriented, engaging, and inspiring. However, I still felt that something was missing to spark the 'Critical Thinking' course to life.

So, I explored our 'Critical Thinking' courseware again, and was actually positively surprised with the quality of the content. However, since it was structured very differently from the course outline and it did not have a search function, naturally students found it quite frustrating to use.

Based on these surface level reflections, I felt (based on my limited knowledge) that I needed to revamp the whole course to really make any difference. However, I also decided to take advantage and extract the learning juices from the three original main course resources just mentioned. Based on my understanding, the problem with this course was not so much the content, but the process on how it was facilitated. Based on my findings, and ***too little focus was given to engaging the student's learning mind to question, analyze, synthesize, reason, problem solve, and make better decisions***, which I believe is the essence of this course. Finally, and importantly for most of our students, English is their second language, and the student population consists of a colorful inter-religious/cultural/racial blend (Indian, Chinese, Malay, etc.), which especially the two recommended critical thinking books are not really tailored to.

Although, I was no master in 'Critical Thinking' (still the case!), I believed that I had enough reasons to take the risk to reengineer the course to make it more relevant and effective.

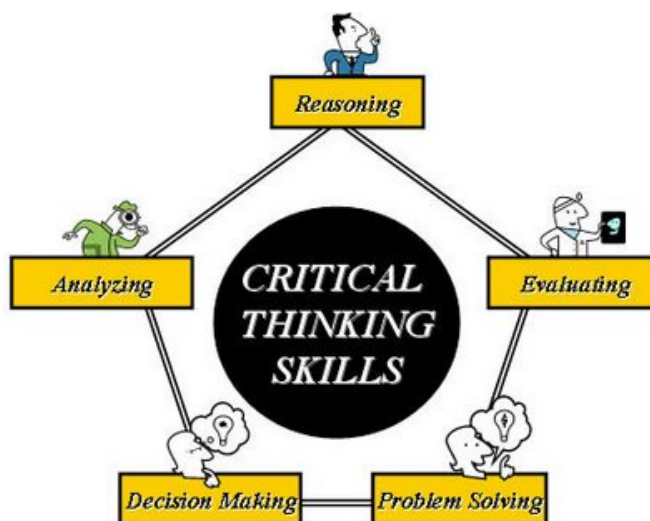


## COURSE PLANNING & PREPARATION

Although, I was planning to reengineer the course, I felt that the original course objectives would remain the same, with just a minor twist. The role of the lecturer coaching 'Critical Thinking' is to:

- ❑ Teach the fundamental thinking, reasoning and language abilities that a student needs for academic success.
- ❑ Engage students in the active thinking process.
- ❑ Integrate the development of thinking abilities with the four skills: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

As students seemed to fear the word "Critical" more than thinking (tough one, too!), I suggested to change the name of the course to just 'Thinking Skills', but that was firmly rejected. Then I had this crazy idea to simply develop the course outline (modules and topics) and learning objectives, and let the students discover, explore, organize, adapt and construct the course content based on existing materials available on the web (User-generated content). This idea was totally rejected. Finally, I suggested to include a 'Creative Thinking' topic, which I felt was missing from the course, but that was also rejected. Creative thinking is different! So, instead I decided to infuse creative thinking into every single module of the 'Critical Thinking' course.



In the end, just before the semester started we managed to agree upon the course outline, which was (Click on the links to view the modules in SlideShare):

1. [Introduction to Critical Thinking](#)
2. [Thinking Tools](#)
3. **Arguments** = [Part I](#) + [Part II](#) + [Part III](#)





4. [Fallacies](#)
5. [Language](#)
6. [Decision Making](#)
7. [Problem Solving](#)

Due to limited time, I constructed the content for each module during the 15-week semester, usually a week or two ahead of schedule. As our University was increasingly becoming more conventional, we were required to conduct a 2-hour F2F tutorial every week with our students. Although, we could use OLT, I decided not to, due to the nature of the course (real-time activity-based), number of students (300+), students status (mostly full-time), lack of broadband Internet access (for some), and that the group of tutors facilitating this course were reasonably experienced (more than me, actually!) and were fully capable of managing their own section(s) without my interference. As a course leader, I was also assigned to manage three (3) sections (90+ students).

However, to improve the possibility of consistent quality, I did prepare lesson plans (and student activity sheets) for the tutors, which gave them some idea on how I would conduct my tutorials. The lesson plans also included answers (if any), tips, and resource links to some of the puzzles, questions, and videos (YouTube) discussed in the presentation slides. In short, I provided them with some ideas on how I would facilitate the tutorials, but empowered them the freedom to think and do it their own way, as long as they covered the syllabus.

## **COURSE CONTENT**

The main focus of the revamped course would be on students' practicing, reflecting and improving their thinking skills, and less emphasize would be given to exploring critical thinking theories, concepts and the endless definitions associated with it. ***What is critical thinking anyway?***

With this in mind, the course content was constructed focused on engaging the students to reflect and improve their ability to question, analyze, synthesize, reason, problem solve, and make constructive decisions.



To deal with the students fear and motivation to think critically, I decided to put Aristotle, Plato and Socrates on the bench, and introduce ***my new dream thinking support team led by Master Yoda, Mr. Bean and Inspector Gadget***. They play a critical role in relaxing the learners' mind to laugh, think, discuss and reflect their own thinking. If Mr. Bean can think critically, why can't I?

Finally, to engage students to think, the content or presentation slides included a lot of thought provoking questions, puzzles, cartoons, pictures, quotes, and group activities to continuously spark the desire to explore the content further.

In short, I extracted and mashed up past learning references, added my flavor, and brought in assistance from another galaxy (e.g. Master Yoda) and Earth (e.g. Mr. Bean) to reengineer the content.

## F2F TUTORIALS

I made it a point from day one that students will have to think-out-loud in this class, and no one will be able to escape this. Of course to loosen up the overall fear, I would first gently force the most nervous or scared looking student in the class to answer an open-ended question with their own opinion. By giving this person encouragement and support to whatever the answer may be, the other students in the class might feel safer to participate. It actually works, even in Malaysia where students are often scared to talk and share their ideas in class.

Every F2F tutorial is broken down into four (4) sessions:

- ❑ **Warm Up** (5 – 15 minutes) – To awaken the students' minds and bring the class to life, I would begin each class with a few brain stimulating activities, which could be a/an puzzle, question, picture, issue, or a quote.
- ❑ **Lecture & Discussion** (30– 40 minutes) – This session is very much like an interactive lecture, whereby I would explain, reflect and discuss together with the students the 'Thinking Menu' of the day.
- ❑ **Group Activities** (45 - 55 minutes) – In this session students are broken up into small groups (4- 6 participants) to collaborate on some relevant thinking activities. Each group have to choose their leader, and are given specific time frames to complete particular tasks (or using specific thinking tools), and then they need to summarize their answers or

findings in writing, and finally one (or more) of the group representatives have to present and discuss the group's output with the class.

- ❑ **Sum Up** (5-10 minutes) – Summarize the module and synthesize/evaluate/reflect the group activity findings.

Students are also required to share and rotate task duties, which will ensure that all students at least once or twice will have the pleasure to present the output to the class during the semester. By having such group activities in each class, students also get to practice their teamwork, time management, communication, listening, writing, and presentation skills while collectively thinking about important issues.



To make the group activities relevant to their learning, I tried to select interesting and meaningful discussion topics. For example, during the first F2F class group activity, students were asked to reflect what it means to be an excellent student and lecturer. They were asked to discuss, identify and rank the “Top 10” characteristics/traits/behaviors of an excellent lecturer and student. By the end of the class we together had actually negotiated what to expect from one another throughout the semester. I told them that I will try my level best to be an excellent lecturer according to their terms (caring, punctual, open minded, effective teaching, etc.), and that I hoped that they could be an excellent student accordingly (hard working, self-disciplined, active participation, honest, etc.).

By the end of the semester we had managed to discuss and reflect collectively a lot of interesting and relevant topics including global warming, great thinkers and inventions, whether

entrepreneurship is genetic or can be learned, the essence of beauty, whether all-star wrestling is real or not, and much more. During the learning process students had also managed to explore several useful thinking tools including mind mapping, six thinking hats, CoRT, and SWOT Analysis.

## ONLINE FORUMS

Students were required to participate in two (2) online forums scheduled during the semester. Each forum carried 2.5 percent (total = 5%) of the course assessment evaluation. Assessment scheme for each forum was:

- ❑ **1.0 %** - For your reflective response to the forum issue.
- ❑ **1.0 %** - for reflecting, adding value or challenging at least one of your classmates' responses.
- ❑ **0.5 %** - for submitting your 1st response within the first week of the forum.

The assessment scheme was set to encourage early participation and threaded discussions (not just a list of short essay answers!).

In the first online forum, students were asked to argue who they thought was the ***greatest thinker of the 20th century***, and in the second forum students were asked to discuss an invention (and the thinking process behind it) that had an influential impact on mankind.

Both forums turned out to be informative and dynamic. Especially, the first forum, where approximately 300 students joined one mega discussion, was a huge challenge beyond the capability of our in-house developed learning management system (LMS), and my browser. After having several mega headaches trying to manage and reflect hundreds of posts, I made sure in the second forum to chunk the discussion into groups based on the course sections, which were facilitated and marked by each individual tutor.





The good thing we can take from the online forums is that **most students know about Wikipedia**. The not so good thing was that many of the students simply copy/pasted from it without giving much thought, or any reference or credit to the source. Interestingly, a few students managed to copy/paste Aristotle, Plato and Socrates from Wikipedia (No comment!). There was even one case of a student copying another students' excellent reflective answer from the forum itself, and then pasting it as his own answer with a minor change to the introduction and conclusion. Luckily, the student being plagiarized informed me about it, and I did the necessary to teach the plagiarizer a lesson he probably won't forget.

Overall, it was a thrill to engage and discuss about great thinkers and inventions (and the struggles they went through) with the students, and many of them took these forums quite seriously, and some of their reflections and arguments were quite impressive. I was also impressed with some of the students' reflective arguments for why they should get a better grade.

### ONLINE QUIZ

Students had to take three small quizzes, each carrying five (5) percent of the course assessment evaluation. One (1) quiz was conducted during a F2F class and two (2) quizzes were conducted online. I gave the students the opportunity to do each online quiz (multiple-choice) from any place within a one week period.

In the first online quiz, I used **randomization of questions (from a question pool) and shuffling of questions/answers**, and I had deliberately created a tough one to awaken and challenge the students to think early on in the course. Interestingly, only 3 out of 272 who took the first online quiz got 100%.

The second online quiz was based on the module 4 (Fallacies). This time around I did not use randomization of questions, but I did continue with shuffling of questions/answers. 60 out of 285 managed to get 100%, which was an astonishing result (and perhaps a much easier quiz!). Interestingly, I had constructed a 'Two Wrongs Make a Right' fallacy in module 4 which says,

***"I don't feel guilty about cheating on Zaid's online quiz. Half the class cheats on his quiz."***

Strangely enough, in one section a whopping 20 out of 42 got 100% correct. The results were impressive, but something was not right. Then I discovered that 17 out of these 20 with full marks



had completed the quiz in less than 3 minutes. Other students who did the quiz took on the average more than 10 minutes to complete. Also, one of the students had come to my office during the quiz period with a friend (in a giggling mood!), claiming that someone else had logged in as her, and done her quiz (and gotten only 90%! ). She asked me to reset her quiz. So, to give her a second chance, I reset her quiz. She took less than 2 minutes to get 100%.

I told the students in the next class that some of them had cheated on the online quiz, and asked those who had done it to come forward and admit their wrongdoing. I also told them about the quiz completion time discovery, and that I had a list of all those that are likely to be guilty, and that this was also a test of integrity and character. After the class, the guilty came forward one by one to apologize for their wrongdoing. Although, they did something wrong, they showed great character to come forward and admit their mistake. To my astonishment, one student made it clear to me that they did not cheat, but instead argued that they had collaborated together to succeed. Now, that got me to think that perhaps we could also conduct online group quizzes in the future, which could be useful to facilitate collaborative learning in a quiz competitive mode. I suppose we all learned a few lessons from this incident.

Finally, if you are planning to conduct online quizzes, keep in mind that ***you will never know who is actually doing the online quiz, unless you have a witness*** (proctored exam), or it is done in a computer lab with surveillance, so that you can verify who is actually doing it. But then again if students really want to cheat, they will find a way. Besides minimizing the possibility of cheating, it is perhaps more useful to encourage and practice good values and behaviors during the learning process. In short, we need to practice good values and behaviors ourselves first, before we can expect such things from our students. Look who's talking!

### GROUP PROJECT & PRESENTATION

In addition to three (3) quizzes, two (2) online forums, and group activities in each F2F session, students were required to work on a group project, which would be presented to the class some time during the last four (4) weeks of the course. They were required to ***research a problem or issue of their choice, and then write a recommendation report*** with constructive suggestions on how to deal with it. Interestingly, I made it compulsory that everyone in the group had to present some portion of their project during the group project presentation. While all shared the same grade for the group project (15%), each student was evaluated individually for the presentation session (10%).



Although, there were many interesting projects and engaging presentations, I suppose the video showed by one of the groups of a person dying from AIDS (last moments!), is something that until today still lingers in my head. Overall, it was good to see that most of the students were confident enough to present and not chicken out. Although, many of the presenters perhaps faced the slides and notes more than the audience, we have to give them credit, because they were also presenting and articulating their findings in English, which is their second language. I suppose with more practice and encouragement, they can master the ability to present confidently with less supporting aids.



## FINAL EXAM

The final exams (50% of the total course evaluation) are conducted F2F at the students' respective study centers. The 'Critical Thinking' course exam included a mixture of short essay and discussion type of questions. The final exam was divided into two sections:

- ❑ **Section A (20%)** – They were given five (5) questions (answer all) to check their understanding on the core concepts learned in this course. They were required to (depending upon the question) identify, describe, differentiate, and give examples.
- ❑ **Section B (30%)** - They were asked to identify the purpose (or main-point), analyze, evaluate and/or give their opinions/reasons/suggestions on an article, advertisement and a quote.

Having punished the students mentally to think-out-loud throughout the course, I suppose I made the final exam reasonably easy to pass (including juicy examination tips!), testing all the six (6) levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

To be honest, I have never been a fan of final exams. If I had the choice I would instead add at least 30% of these marks for class participation (Currently only 5%). If I was to take any of those final exams I took during my undergraduate and graduate studies, I would surely fail this time around (Even if I got 'A' previously!). So, ***what are final exams measuring anyway?*** Then





again, we cannot blame it on the final exam mode, but instead we should question those asking the questions.

## RESULTS

### ***Were students satisfied?***

It was encouraging to know that I averaged approximately 90% (you need at least 85% to be nominated for best lecturer award!) in the teaching/course evaluation survey over three (3) sections. However, it was more encouraging to learn that the total average for this course was around 85% (including the tutors' results).

However, ***did learning take place?*** It is difficult to verify this one, but I know for sure that 92.9% of all the students taking this course (316) managed to pass it. I do have some positive and constructive comments to share here from a few students and tutors.

- "(Student)...Thank you for your guidance and not forgetting your lively classes. It's been a month since the exam and I must say ***all the fallacies learnt remain and is being applied*** in everyday reading materials and at workplace with..."
- "(Student)...Last but not least I would like to thank you for being "***the teacher that inspires***". I truly enjoyed myself in your class and would really look forward to being your student again (No.no.. I don't want to repeat Critical Thinking ..maybe for other subject)..."
- "(Student)...Thank you very much for your quick reply. You are certainly a very good, ***efficient and helpful lecturer***. From my experience, you are the second lecturer who have answered my questions during the holiday but for this semester the only one. They should be more lecturers like you..."
- "(Student)... honestly I have learned a lot from this course, not only in thinking, but more than what I could describe here. Really enjoyed your class and ***the way you teach has definitely changed the way I looked at learning myself...***"



- “(Tutor)...Your Forum 2 question is very interesting and the rules and regulations suggested are good. That will make the students send in their answers earlier...It's nice having you as the course leader. **You are so efficient and informative.**”
- “(Tutor)...I must let you know that I am very happy with your approach to the critical thinking course. It has **such a fresh and imaginative look**. The slides are so attractive and I like the F2F Lesson Plan. It keeps us aware on how you (as a course leader) look at things. Please keep that up...”

Now this is pleasing to my ego! As for [Kirkpatrick's levels of evaluation](#) 3 and 4, it is difficult to provide any concrete evidence, except for comments such as the ones above. But let's hope that students can apply some the thinking skills learned during the course and gain some positive results in their studies, work and life. Actually, I should track these 316 students down and find out!

## AREAS TO IMPROVE

One year has passed since I revamped the 'Critical Thinking' course. I only managed to facilitate this course for one semester, and then the top management argued that I could be more effective to the University doing other things than actually teaching students. Luckily, the course is still being taught and that they are still using my little contribution to 'Critical Thinking' at the undergraduate level.

However, having become one year wiser (or dumber!) and discovered through reading what is needed to survive in places like Microsoft or Google, I believe this 'Critical Thinking' course needs to be constructively destroyed and reengineered. Here are a few things that I would do, if I had the chance to revamp it again:

- **Challenging Puzzles/Exercises** – I would add new puzzles and thinking exercises to challenge the students' analytical, imaginative and problem solving skills to the level they can expect from a Microsoft or Google interview. Give them a taste of it, which might actually accelerate their motivation to learn.
- **Leaner Modules** - Streamline the modules to consist of fewer topics and concepts, and instead spend more time on each element, enabling students to have more time to learn, practice and reflect before moving on. Especially, the 'Arguments' module would be



totally revamped (simplify and focus), which was too much based on the book ([Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction](#)'), due to my lack of knowledge in this area.

- ❑ **Online Tools** - Would use more tools such as [online surveys/polls](#) (to gather students' opinions and collectively reflect) and perhaps [LAMS](#) (Learning Activity Management System), which could be useful for sequencing and managing thinking activities such as Six Thinking hats. Also, I would request students to use [wikis](#) to work on their group projects, enabling me to follow the progress of the project. In addition, it would be interesting to explore 3D virtual worlds like [Second Life](#) and examine how it can nurture and motivate students to think-out-loud in such environments. In short, I would use more online learning tools to facilitate thinking beyond the physical classroom.
- ❑ **More Videos** – Although, I did use a few YouTube videos to stimulate thinking during the first round, I would probably embed more short videos this time around to engage the mind and bring the class to life.
- ❑ **New Dream Thinking Team** – Although, I would probably keep Master Yoda and Mr. Bean in my team, I would try to include local cartoons, such as [LAT](#) (if possible).

To improve my coaching or facilitation skills I would explore, study and reflect videos of well-known educators in formal and informal education around the world, which can today be easily accessed for free through [YouTube channels](#) (Stanford, MIT, Berkeley, etc.) or other video sharing sites (e.g. [VIDEOLECTURES.net](#)). In short, the only thing stopping us from becoming a good educator is our reluctance to learn, explore and challenge ourselves continuously (and a good Internet connection!).

In short, the 'Critical Thinking' course would be revamped again to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

## CONCLUSION

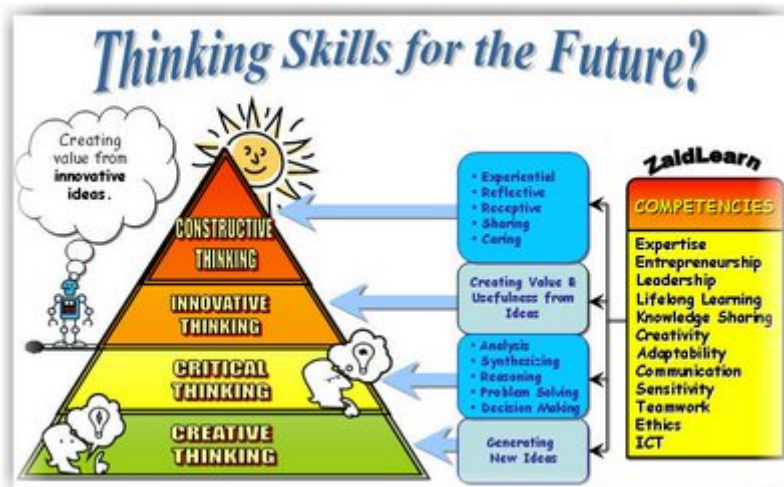
Oh man, you are still reading! Alright, I will have to say a few more things before I take off to my next learning adventure. First, if you ask me, I would not get so obsessed in trying to differentiate critical, creative, innovative or inventive thinking (learning and thinking prefers no human constructed borders!) during class, but instead focus increasingly on finding new ways to nurture

and **infuse more thinking into the students' learning process for all courses, so that when they graduate it has become a habit for life.**

Also, I would strongly recommend that we continue to have at least one or two courses that explore thinking and thinking tools intensively, enabling us to flex our imaginative, creative and analytical thinking muscles (e.g. using six thinking hats, SWOT, Disney Creativity Strategy, and 'Five Ws and H'). In addition, we could always use our analytical imagination to create new thinking tools.

If you ask me, I would argue that the **essence of all thinking boils down to asking QUESTIONS**. And we all can do that, and therefore we all have the ability to think. Which fallacy did I just commit?

If we can encourage students to ask more questions, going beyond the compartments of their disciplines, and increasingly **nurture the courage in them to explore new ideas**, we are probably on the right track. I remember way back in 1992, I had just finished my college degree (similar to A-Levels) at Ullern



Gymnas (Oslo, Norway), and had just managed to scrape through. I was so sick of formal education that I made a promise to myself to never study again. Here I am in 2008, sharing my experiences on facilitating "Critical Thinking" to undergraduate students at UNITAR, in Malaysia. You just never know :)

### 13. E-LEARNING 2.0 WORKSHOP (STEPHEN DOWNES)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/01/e-learning-20-workshop-stephen-downes.html>



**Web 1.0 = Read**

**Web 2.0 = Read -Write**

**Web 3.0 = Read -Write - Research**

**Web 4.0 = Read -Write - Research - Rambo!**

At last I got to meet [Stephen Downes](#) in person and attend one of his workshops. Better yet, due to a secret arrangement (Not telling!) I got to become his personal bodyguard (I mean assistant) during this 2-day workshop in Kuala Lumpur (14th - 15th January). You can see me on the picture happily holding tightly to the handheld laser gun (I mean camera!).

In this **e-Learning 2.0** workshop facilitated by Stephen (who actually entitled it 'Web 2.0 in Learning'), participants explored a full range of web 2.0 tools, and discussed (including group activities) how these tools could facilitate more effective communication, collaboration and learning. The intention was to **explore the underlying technologies and to develop a sense of what to expect in the future.**





## NEW DISCOVERIES!

The thing about attending workshops facilitated by people like Stephen is that you can be sure of discovering a lot of new learning stuff on the way. Here are new learning tools and sites that I discovered during this great workshop:

- ❑ [Gliffy](#) - A free web-based diagram editor.
- ❑ [Zoho](#) - Offers a suite of online web applications geared towards increasing your productivity and offering easy collaboration.
- ❑ [LiveJournal](#) - A free service for your journaling and blogging.
- ❑ [Bebo](#) - Allows users to share photos with music, and blogs, and draw on members' White Boards.
- ❑ [Pixier](#) - Lets you manipulate, edit, enhance and apply filters to your digital pictures using only your web browser.
- ❑ [Ustream.tv](#) - You can broadcast your own live video show for free. You only need a computer device, camera and solid Internet connection. Not bad!
- ❑ [Worldbridges](#) - A community of communities that use 'homegrown webcasting' and other new media technologies to help people connect, learn, & collaborate.
- ❑ [EdTechTalk](#) - A community of educators interested in discussing and learning about the uses of educational technology. They webcast several live shows each week.

In addition, we discussed many other web 2.0 learning tools such [Ning](#) (Social Networking), [Second Life](#) ( 3D virtual world) and [Wikispaces](#), which I have already explored, but are worth mentioning here ([Check out the slides](#) to discover the rest!).

Not only did we discover new tools from Stephen, he also discovered a few new learning tools from us, including:

- ❑ [WiZiQ](#) - Free Hosted Virtual Classroom platform.
- ❑ [CamStudio](#) - Free Screen Recording Software.
- ❑ [eSnips](#) - Get 5GB of free space to upload and share your files, photos, videos and music.

In other words, no matter how brilliant we are, we can always learn and discover stuff from others. Therefore, I would argue that Stephen Downes is brilliant, because he knows this and practices it all the time (Any logic here!).





However, of all the things I discovered, learned and explored during the workshop, I personally found the reading resources shared the most valuable to my learning mind. I suppose it is easier to find a new tool or site (at least for me!), than discover a great article or paper among millions. Anyway, here is a list of a few of those relevant and mind enriching writings, which Stephen recommended us to explore further ([Check out the slides](#) to discover the rest! 2nd time!):

- ❑ [The Cluetrain Manifesto](#) - Markets are about conversations (an e-Book by several authors). If you are lazy, at least read the 95 theses to get some idea.
- ❑ [E-Learning 2.0](#) - (Stephen Downes)
- ❑ [What is Web 2.0](#) - The web as platform. Design patterns and business models for the next generation of software (Tim O'Reilly).
- ❑ [Educational Blogging](#) - (Stephen Downes)
- ❑ [How to Be Heard](#) - (Stephen Downes)
- ❑ [The Long Tail](#) - Why the future of business is selling less of more (Clay Shirky/Chris Anderson).
- ❑ [MySpace is My Identity Space](#) - (Danah Boyd)
- ❑ [Wisdom of Crowds](#) - (James Surowiecki)

And the juicy list of excellent reading resources (especially about blogging and social networks) goes on and on ([Check out the slides](#) to discover the rest! 3rd time lucky!). As I had not read many of these recommended reading resources before, it was a thrill to discover them.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Since, I was his personal assistant and camera man during the 2-day workshop, I really got to zoom in on Stephen Downes and discover more about him (I am not sure if the video recordings I took are up to mark, though! First time!). I suppose I can go on here (until the break of dawn!), writing about all the things I observed and learned from him, but I will only highlight a few important lessons I learned here, which we all can take note and actually do something about.

Even Stephen Downes does not know everything about e-learning, and he does not see that as a weakness either (opportunity to learn more!). Instead, he gets excited when someone in the crowd knows something he doesn't (a challenge, too!), and wants to learn about it straight away. Since we have a computer and Internet connection, let's explore the possibilities together using Google, right now (Why wait!).





In other words, it is alright to say '***I don't know***', when a participant or student asks a question, which we don't know the answer to. If no one participating in the session knows, we can always explore it together using Google, or whatever search tool we find relevant for the task (or get back to the question later, when we have an answer). If we take that kind of attitude and approach into our learning environments, we will not fear questions (essence of creative and critical thinking!), and students will eventually not fear to ask questions (mind of inquiry). Both the educators and student will benefit! You will learn more (about the content, students and yourself!), and students will not only learn more, but be more active in the learning process, taking responsibility and improving their ability to ask questions. Even before we discover a problem, or conceptualize a great idea (which might lead to an invention or innovation), we need to ask questions (Zooming in on the right or AHA ones!). Questions might seem like a threat first, but if you learn how to love them, and deal with them head-on, the rest is a ball :)

In terms of conducting a workshop (lecture, tutorial, etc.), I learned that you must always be able to quickly adapt the sessions (or classes) to the learning expectations and needs of the participants, and be able to revise and reform your workshop activities on-the-fly to ensure a more effective and relevant learning experience. Sometimes, participants might not even know what they really want, but you still have to explore through relevant questions early on, and by using your emotional, observational, and analytical intelligence (e.g. What do you know about \_\_\_\_? What are your past experiences with \_\_\_\_? What do you want to learn? ). Even if you fail to satisfy their learning expectations and needs, they will most likely appreciate your efforts to tailor and customize the learning event. I suppose the main challenge will be to meet all the participants learning expectations and needs. But that is a challenge we have to deal with, if we want to be an effective educator. And by using web 2.0 technologies like blogs, wikis, social networking sites, virtual worlds, etc. appropriately, and getting participants involved in creating, remixing, mashing-up and sharing knowledge, we are probably moving forward.

In short, we need to get everyone involved in ***exploring, discovering, learning, doing, reflecting, creating, and sharing*** knowledge and ideas. By doing so, we are nurturing their ability to learn (how to learn!). If you are able to spark, participants or students will take care of the rest.



## **FUTURE LEARNING DIRECTIONS**

Stephen identifies five (5) main future directions of learning (and e-learning) in his slides. I have added some of my thoughts to these five directions.

### ❑ ***Learning as Creation***

We increasingly learn by creating/remixing knowledge, products and services during the learning process (not only consuming), with the assistance of increasingly more powerful and user-friendly learning tools.

### ❑ ***Social Learning***

We learn by interacting with others locally and around the world, which is increasingly being enabled more efficiently and effectively with the assistance of technology (Global Collective Intelligence). Imagine participating in global learning communities and getting access to some of the greatest minds on this planet with just a few clicks. Here I am talking to Jay Cross, Jane Knight, Joseph Hart, Stephen Downes and Clayton Wright on Skype. The only cost is basically our time.

### ❑ ***Personal Learning Environment***

People will increasingly be able to construct their own customized and convenient learning spaces, which integrates all their informal and formal learning tools. In other words, we might soon say goodbye to LMS, LCMS, portals, etc., sooner than we realize. They will probably exist, but we will hardly visit them, and mostly read their news feeds from our all-to-one learning dashboards. One User ID and Password! One Learning Space! Tons of Learning Tools! All are communicating with one another! We can get all our relevant updates from one learning space, and we can update all our learning tools with one update (Create once, publish many). WOW! That is cool!

### ❑ ***Immersive Learning***

Augmented reality and 3D virtual worlds with fully immersive tools enabling every sense of our body to engage in the learning process. It also reflects that we will increasingly be able to construct cost-effective simulated learning environments that are close to the real thing. We are able to do and practice things in safe virtual learning environments that we

could only dream about in the past (e.g. manage Google, build spaceships, teleport to Mars, discuss global warming with Al Gore, and engage in past civilizations). In short, we can stimulate all our senses to fully immerse ourselves in safe virtual learning environments that are similar, or close replications of the real ones. Practice without getting physically hurt (though, we might get a bit of mental stress!).

❑ **The Living Arts** (Things You Really Need to Learn)

We don't follow strictly the requirements and needs of PhD, Masters, Bachelor and Diploma programs, programs are instead tailored to our relevant learning needs, and we are empowered to construct our own learning opportunities and environments that enable and motivate us to find and fulfill our learning potential. Why learn something that we never use, or want to know?



In addition to learning a lot of stuff from Stephen, I learned a lot from more than 40 participants both from the corporate and the education (mostly Higher Education) sectors in Malaysia (picture below). Interestingly, we are also planning to start an official e-Learning community (whereby we physically meet on regular occasions) in Malaysia, and if you are interested to find out more about that, please join or visit our new [Malaysian e-Learning Community](#) in Facebook (you need a Facebook

account to join). Finally, I would like to thank FIK International for organizing a great workshop.

Oh, I forgot (this post is getting long!)! You might be wondering why Stephen and the '*Myau*' picture. Well, during the first day of the workshop we all suddenly heard the sound of cat ('Myau'), and Stephen probably thought he was going a bit nutty, or the jet lag was really getting to him (which it was, I suppose!). However, it was only a ringtone to one of the participants, and we all had a great laugh! So, the picture is in memory of this funny informal learning incident. *Myau!!!*

In conclusion, I am glad that I attended the workshop (and became Stephen's workshop

assistant), and got to know Stephen better. These are the kind of learning experiences that spark our motivation to learn and explore more. Yeah, now I am also a certified e-Learning 2.0 specialist (by attendance). If you are interested to learn more, please give me a buzz :)



“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. *The great teacher inspires.*”

- William Arthur Ward

## 14. OPTIMIZING ELEARNING STRATEGY (BRYAN CHAPMAN)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/12/optimizing-elearning-strategy-bryan.html>

### WHO?

"Bryan Chapman is **Chief Learning Strategist** at Chapman Alliance, LLC; a provider of *research-centric consulting solutions that assist organizations in defining, operating and optimizing their strategic learning initiatives*. As a veteran in the industry, he has over 20 years experience and has worked with such organizations as American Express, Shell, Kodak, Sprint, Sharp Electronics, Honda, IBM, Microsoft, Avon, UNICEF, The Food and Drug Administration, U.S. State Department, and many others; to help them *optimize learning efficiency through the use of innovative learning techniques and technologies*.



Bryan was formerly the Director of Research and Strategy for independent research and consulting firm [Brandon Hall Research](#), where he served as the *primary author and researcher on high profile projects* such as the LMS Knowledgebase, LCMS Comparative Analysis Report, Comparison of Simulation Products and Services, and a comprehensive study of custom content developers in the industry [...more](#) "

### WHAT?

If you are wondering why my blog has been quiet for a few days (Not really!), it is simply because I have been engrossed learning from Bryan Chapman (and other participants) while attending a 2-day workshop entitled '**Optimizing eLearning Strategy**' at Park Royal Hotel, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). The workshop was essentially about *leveraging learning technologies efficiently and effectively to improve organizational and individual learning outcomes*. It covered Alignment, Benchmarking, ROI (Return on Investment), Rapid Development, Content Reusability, Informal Learning, Learning Governance, Blended Learning, Performance Management, and brining it all together.



It was certainly a great learning adventure, and I at last got to meet one of the Brandon Hall researchers in person. This was a workshop that I simply did not want to end, but usually when you really enjoy something, time seems to fly faster (and it certainly did!). From start to finish, Bryan Chapman engaged us (and thrilled my learning mind!) with his vast experience, case studies, showcase samples, and nuggets of wisdom that can hopefully assist us in the present and future to strategize a more **People-Process-Technology (PPT)** efficient and effective e-learning (or simply 'Learning') strategy.

## JUICE

Not all of us have the opportunity (or can afford) to meet and learn from an experienced learning strategist such as Bryan Chapman. However, if we can't learn from them directly, we can at least enjoy their free resources made available for us to download and reflect. Here are a few wonderful resources from Bryan Chapman, which could assist us in making better decisions in identifying e-learning needs, people, processes and technologies, and initiating a more efficient and effective learning strategy ([Source](#)):

- ❑ [Creating the Ideal RFP](#) (99K)  
It provides practical advice for creating a Request for Proposal (RFP) when shopping for a learning management system (LMS).
- ❑ [How to Buy E-Learning Systems, Tools and Services](#) (626K)  
Information on how to systematically choose learning solutions in many areas such as authoring, simulation tools, LMS, LCMS, etc.
- ❑ [Learning Brief: Instructor-Led Training Development Times and Costs](#) (554K)  
This learning brief is based on a survey conducted November 2007 asking companies how long it takes to create each finished hour of instructor-led training (ILT). It is available as a PowerPoint. If you quote in your presentation, please cite the source of this study (included in the PowerPoint).
- ❑ [Reusability 2.0: The Key to Publishing Learning](#) (481K)  
This paper contains 3 excellent case studies that demonstrate the possibilities of reusing learning content across multiple delivery formats (Very thought provoking material).
- ❑ [Small to Medium-Sized Business Slides](#) (2.2M)  
The presentation slides for session entitled "Leveraging Best Practices of Enterprise Learning for Small to Medium-Sized Businesses."

If you visit Bryan's [resource page](#), you will find more free e-learning related documents.



## LESSONS LEARNED

***If you are looking for an e-Learning strategist, who are you going to call?*** BRYAN CHAPMAN! If you ask me, I would especially recommend Bryan Chapman if you are in the corporate sector and are looking for appropriate commercial e-learning solutions to optimize your learning strategy. However, if you are looking for open source solutions, perhaps you should consult people such as Stephen Downes instead; who is interestingly conducting an eLearning 2.0 (Web 2.0) workshop next month at JW Marriott, Kuala Lumpur. WOW! I wish I could attend, but I doubt I will get the funding. Sometimes lucky, sometimes not!

Bryan's only weakness (or lack of knowledge to my opinion based on the limited time we interacted with him), which I believe will evolve into a major strength soon (with his hunger-to-learn!), is his knowledge on the availability and possibilities of open source/free learning solutions. However, his knowledge on corporate e-learning solutions, is simply amazing! What do you expect from a person that has literally analyzed and evaluated hundreds of commercial e-learning systems, tools, and services (e.g. LMS, LCMS, Virtual Classrooms), and worked with some of the biggest companies in the world.

As for ***lessons learned***, I suppose my mind is still trying to come to terms with all the juice I have digested in my learning mind, and would probably need a week, or two with recap reflections to really appreciate and understand all the great things I have learned during this amazing workshop. The workshop certainly fulfilled my expectations, and I also learned a whole deal just watching and analyzing Bryan Chapman in action (My psychology mind working!). For example, I loved the fact that when he learned something new and interesting during the workshop from the participants, he would try to add it immediately to his slides. No ego, No pride, just eager to learn and make use of it immediately!



After reflecting again [Kirkpatrick's four \(4\) levels of evaluation](#) (which also came up during the workshop), I believe level 1 (Truly Satisfied!) and level 2 (Learned a lot!) have been achieved, but the real objective of attending the workshop is not only to learn, but to be able to apply (level 3) what we have learned to our work, and hopefully achieve, or exceed the expected





outcomes (Level 4). In short, learning without any application and/or results, might be useful for a person, but has little value for the organization as a whole, unless levels 3 and 4 are achieved.

In other words, I hope the things I learned during this workshop, can assist us to ***optimize our learning strategy, improve our teaching and learning environment, and increase our competitive advantage from an educational point-of-view.*** I suppose this post (with reflection of results) will be continued sometime in the ... :)

“The whole art of teaching is only the  
art of awakening the natural curiosity of  
young minds.”

- Anatole France

## 15. PROFESSOR LEWIN INSPIRES US TO LEARN PHYSICS AGAIN!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/12/professor-lewin-inspires-us-to-learn.html>

### WHO?

[Walter H. G. Lewin](#) is currently a professor of Physics at MIT. He earned his Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics in 1965 at the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands...[more](#)



### WHAT?

Professor Lewin has long had **a cult following at MIT**, and now thanks to the Internet and initiatives like MIT's OpenCourseWare (OCW), is part of a new generation of academic stars (or should we say 'Old') that are making their own mark in the online learning sphere without charge (beyond the classroom). Hopefully this form of entertainment or education will increasingly get more media attention, and more importantly increasingly grab the attention of the young (and old!) learning minds around the world. I suppose a few hours of Professor Lewin's inspiring lectures could be spared in-between our usually blended dosage of online entertainment, fun and junk.

### JUICE

If you are looking for MIT Audio/Video courses in general, simply [click here](#) (and have fun learning from all these sometimes nutty but inspiring MIT professors). If you are eager to explore Professor Lewin's video lectures, you can find dozens of them in the following three (3) courses:

- ❑ [Lewin's MIT Physics 8.01 videos: Classical Mechanics](#)
- ❑ [Lewin's MIT Physics 8.02 videos: Electricity and Magnetism](#)
- ❑ [Lewin's MIT Physics 8.03 videos: Vibrations and Waves](#)

If you are looking for a few of his video lectures to kick-start your inspiring learning journey, perhaps these four (4) videos will be a good start:

- ❑ [A Demonstration of Electrostatics](#)

- ❑ [Trajectories of Objects in Freefall](#)
- ❑ [How a Rocket Lifts Off](#)
- ❑ [A Lecture on Pendulums](#)



You will probably notice when watching his lectures that he uses unique and creative ways to engage his students (Yes that is him on the picture above doing his thing!). Although, he is already 71 years old, it does not seem to hold him back to demonstrate the wonders of physics, and occasionally he puts his life (and the students) at risk (or may seem so thanks to his great humor!). For example, in one of his lectures he rides a fire-extinguisher-propelled tricycle across his classroom to [show how a rocket lifts off](#).

Now, you may be wondering **how long it takes him to prepare such a lecture**. He said in the NYT interview that it takes him around **25 hours** to prepare each new lecture, choreographing every detail and stripping out every extra sentence. “Clarity is the word,” he said.

Coming to think of it, all these free lectures found increasingly on the web (check 'Podcasts' category on my blog for a long and useful list of video/audio lecture directories) are not only useful for those learning different knowledge domains and topics, but also critical for lecturers who want to improve their teaching, facilitating and lecturing skills. By spending time exploring and reflecting all these new academic super stars innovative and inspiring lecturing practices, we can pick up a few tricks here and there. If we follow Sam Walton's good old learning approach, we could pick up a trick or two from any lecturer (or any shop in his case!).



Let's face it, we live in **global learning space**, and students are increasingly going to be aware of all these great free video lectures within their learning domains. So, should we perhaps cancel our lectures (and only conduct tutorials) and ask them to watch these great lectures instead?

No doubt, we should link (URLs) our students to these great free video/audio lectures when relevant. Also, I believe we should also learn from these inspiring Professors (too!), and then put our own contextualized flavor and spice to our lectures (and tutorials), and engage our students in relevant discussions and activities.

Professor Lewin said, "**Teaching is my life.**" Is teaching your life? Do you have the passion and fire to spark! Do you have the ability and creativity to inspire? If your students are or become inspired to learn your subject, you don't need to teach them, they will learn on their own. Interestingly, they might also remember you for a lifetime for sparking them to life :)

**"The secret to success is failure."**

- Scott Parry

## 16. TEACHING HABITS THAT INSPIRE YOU OUT OF LEARNING (PART 1)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/04/teaching-habits-that-inspire-you-out-of.html>



"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates.

***THE GREAT TEACHER INSPIRES.***" - WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD

Can anyone become a great educator (teacher or lecturer)? Or is it gift that we are born with (Nature)? Or can we become a great educator through learning, practice, feedback, reflection, etc. (Nurture)? Or perhaps it is a combination of Nature and Nurture? Or perhaps it is neither? What are the characteristics of a great educator anyway?

### WHAT GOOD TEACHERS SAY ABOUT TEACHING?

"At the University of California at Berkeley, the Distinguished Teaching Award was instituted in 1959 to recognize and reward excellence in teaching. Since the inception of the award, over 150 faculty in forty-eight departments have been honored...although these essays (by the award winners) were prepared independently over a number of years, there are striking similarities about what good teachers say about teaching. On at least ten propositions, the contributors are in near or total agreement ([Source](#)):



1. The teacher's main task is to **GUIDE** students through the learning process, not to dispense information.
2. The goal of teaching is to help students read, speak, write, and **THINK CRITICALLY**—and to expect students to **do** these things.
3. Learning is a "**MESSY**" process, and the search for truth and knowledge is **OPEN-ENDED**.
4. Good teachers **LOVE** their subject matter.
5. Good **RESEARCH** and good teaching go hand in hand. Students' engagement with the subject is enhanced by knowing about the teacher's own research, and the interaction with students often provides new insights into the research.
6. The best teachers genuinely **RESPECT** students and their intellectual capabilities.
7. Good teachers are rarely satisfied with their teaching. They constantly evaluate and **MODIFY** what they do.
8. Good teachers usually had good teachers, and they see themselves as **PASSING ON** their own teachers' gifts to a new generation of students.
9. Good teachers treasure the small moments of **DISCOVERY** in the classroom and the more enduring effect they have on students' lives.
10. Good teachers do not see teaching as separate from other activities; rather, they see their lives as remarkably **INTEGRATED**."

The interesting thing today is that we increasingly have access (if we have Internet!) to all sorts of content about the art of excellent teaching ([A short list](#)). In addition, we can also study and reflect amazing lecturers through video lectures and podcasts from many of the most respected Universities around the world, including MIT, Harvard, Yale, Oxford and Cambridge ([YouTube Channels](#), [Podcasts](#) and [OpenCourseWare](#)).

So, **WHY CAN'T WE INSPIRE ALL OUR STUDENTS TO LEARN** (if you can, please share your secret!)? That is a tough question beyond my intellect, knowledge and experience (I suppose because it needs two to tango)! However, let's play a bit with this question, and instead ask, "what were the least inspiring teachers we experienced during our student days?" Or more specifically, "**WHAT WERE THE TEACHING HABITS THAT INSPIRED US OUT OF LEARNING?**"



## 5-PART SERIES

In this 5-part series (which might evolve into a 10-part series!), I will reflect specific teaching habits practiced by some educators that I experienced personally during my 20 years career as a student (I suppose when I do my PhD I can add another 3-4 years). I am not interested in witch hunting any particular educator (I am really bad with names anyway, so that is not a problem!). Instead, I am trying to reflect back and learn from their teaching habits (and perhaps avoid them!) that made me wonder: Are you kidding me? Is this guy for real? This guy needs a life! What is wrong with him? Can't he see that we are sleeping! Don't teachers undergo training on how to teach and facilitate learning? Perhaps he doesn't care!

Since I have had the privilege to experience educators from every major continent of the world during my 20-year career as a student, I suppose I will have some very interesting teaching habits to share with all of you. Whether they are bad teaching habits or not, I will leave that for you to decide. But one thing is for sure, these teaching habits certainly inspired me out of learning.

Finally, before we begin this '**UNLEARNING**' journey, I have to admit I have never been an easy student to deal with. During my primary and secondary school I was rude, noisy, and spent a lot of time in detention. I literally slept through high-school, and just managed to scrape through. Once, one lecturer threatened to kick me out of class if I didn't stop sleeping, and even placed me in the front row to ensure that I didn't sleep. It didn't help much! When you are tired, and have to sit through a boring lecture, what do you expect! I suppose if I had taken more vitamin supplements, given up on football, stopped having fun, and slept earlier, things would have been different. I suppose it is a learning process!

Then I moved to Malaysia, and the power of faith (Islam) brought the passion back to learn in me. During my undergraduate and graduate days, I forced myself to sit in the front row until it became a habit I am proud of. Not only did I sit in front, I also become the ultimate annoying student that always asked questions. I became the kind of smart-aleck I used to despise in my younger days. In a nutshell, that is my story as a student. Now, let's move on to the real point of this 5-part series.



## WHITEBOARD AND I ARE ONE!



During my undergraduate studies, I had a very interesting **STATISTICS LECTURER**, which I will name **DR. WOODY** (woodpecker) for the name protection sake. Dr. Woody was a multimedia encyclopedia of statistics, and he certainly did not need to refer to any book or notes during his lectures. He had perfected every lecture he conducted. In addition, he was a caring guy and always smiled. So, what is the problem! Yeah! Hmm, got a point there!

Interestingly, I had two different statistics (can't remember the names!) subjects with Dr. Woody that semester, and we only had a 10-minute break in-between the two 90-minute sessions twice a week (6 hours a week with Dr. Woody).

Dr. Woody was always punctual and so was I. I remember, he would always be stressed at the beginning of each class and would be eager to start as fast as possible, so that we could **COMPLETE THE SYLLABUS ON TIME**. As soon as he began teaching, he would face the whiteboard with his markers, and begin the magic statistics writing adventure. And you know what, he would just go on, and on, and on, and on, like a dog hunting a fox. His urgency to do his thing (teach!), gave him no time to turn back and assist the helpless students in shock! We managed to complete 50% of the syllabus within the first 3 weeks of a 14-week semester. Of course it was impressive to see Dr. Woody practically write the book on the whiteboard, doing it at a speed that even Ferrari would not be able to match.

My fingers (and brain) used to be really exhausted after two consecutive 90-minute sessions (twice week) of nonstop writing (15-25 pages of notes each time!), trying to capture everything that Dr. Woody wrote on the whiteboard. Thank GOD many lecturers today use PowerPoint, or



provide some form of course notes. However, we have to keep in mind that taking notes by itself is a skill that all students should master. Because in most working environments, there probably won't be any books or notes to rescue us, and solve all our problems.

## REFLECTION

It was only after I discovered notes taken from his previous students that I realized how amazing Dr. Woody's memory was. It was as if he had imprinted the notes and formulas in his brain, and simply repeated it again and again every semester. Even a **PHOTOCOPY MACHINE** would be proud of such perfection. Although, we got to experience him do his thing (process flow!), it was kind of overwhelming, and I believe most of us had problems dealing with the information overload. I suppose if we could replay the lecture in slow motion (many times!), it would be more useful.

Interestingly, when I revised the notes I had taken from Dr. Woody's lectures, I couldn't even remember that I had written them. Did I really write that! I suppose **I HAD NO TIME TO THINK WHILE TAKING THE NOTES.**

Overall, Dr. Woody was knowledgeable, skillful, caring, experienced, and an expert in his subject area. However, I am not sure I learned much about statistics from him. Actually, I didn't! Though, since I had the **PASSION TO DO WELL**, I managed to do quite well anyway.

But, what is important to keep in mind here, is that being an authority in a knowledge domain, does not mean that we are fit to educate and facilitate learning. Even worse, some educators have an amazing **ABILITY TO MAKE YOU SICK OF A SUBJECT** (They might argue that it is self-inflicted!). Is that a natural gift, too?

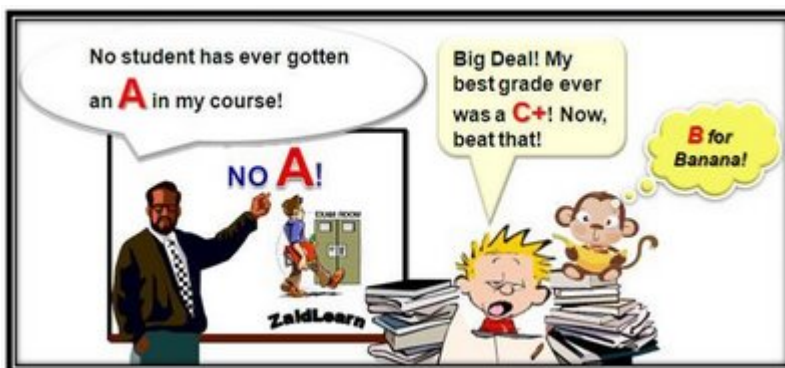
Although, it is important to learn new ways to improve our teaching, it is also important to reflect our own existing teaching methods, and perhaps **UNLEARN THOSE THAT REALLY INSPIRE PEOPLE OUT OF LEARNING.**

Until Part II, let's explore our own teaching, and try to point out to ourselves (at least!) a few habits that might turn students off learning.

"That student is an idiot! I have told him a 100 times and he still doesn't get it!" :)

## 17. I HAVE BRAGGING RIGHTS, BECAUSE I AM ... (PART 2)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/04/i-have-bragging-rights-because-i-am.html>



*"If you done it, it ain't bragging."*

- Walt Whitman

*"It's not bragging if you can back it up."*

- Muhammad Ali

***"He who is humble is confident and wise. He who brags is insecure and lacking."***

- Lisa Edmondson

In the last episode, we got a taste of a lecturer that only had time to engage the whiteboard, so that he could complete his syllabus. This time around, I will have to put on my student experience goggles and transport myself back to an undergraduate psychology course (Deviant Behavior) I took in the previous millennium. For the identity protection sake, we will name this lecturer **Dr. Brag**.

### DEVANT BEHAVIOR

Dr. Brag was not an ordinary lecturer. No, he was an extraordinary lecturer! I used to enjoy coming to his classes, and occasionally he ***practiced what he preached***, too. So, why are you writing about Dr. Brag? Let's begin!



Although, I admired his expertise, experience and knowledge, it got kind of frustrating listening to him brag (boastful statements/arrogant talk) about all his amazing achievements every class. By the end of the course, we probably knew more about him and his family's achievements than the subject matter itself. Every class, we would hear **one self-glory ego-boosting story after another**, covering his greatness in sports, politics, work, family and education. Yes, he was also writing more than 10 books concurrently at that time. My best friend was assisting him in editing these books, and that must have been reasonably challenging. I wonder if Dr. Brag ever finished writing any of those amazing books.

I have to feel sorry for the guy, too. He had high blood pressure and was a diabetic in a country like Malaysia. Now, that is a bad combination, especially when the classroom is hot and humid with many students who are mentally on holiday. Or sleeping with their eyes open!

Anyway, I was there! Since I had already developed the habit of sitting in the front row and asking questions, the classes got quite lively at times. Although, he bragged a lot, I loved the fact that he would always challenge us. The one bragging challenge that really got to me was that he was happy to claim that, "**No student in my class has ever gotten an A!**" I am not sure if that is something a lecturer should be proud of, but strangely some are.

That was a challenge too good to resist. I didn't get that many 'As' during my undergraduate days, but somehow this particular challenge inspired me to get one. And I am really proud to share with you all that I was the **first student at the University to achieve an A with him** (Am I bragging or what! I hope he was actually telling the truth!). The glory was short lived though, as I heard that others got 'As' with him in the following semesters. Well, I am proud to be the first one at least (Bragging again!).

I suppose 'Deviant Behavior' was a course that came naturally to me, so I should not think so highly of my success. It is also no surprise that I also scored an 'A' in 'Abnormal Psychology' (Oh man, can you stop bragging!). Some students scores 'As' all the way, some score 'As' in only subjects they like and some don't get a single one. Nothing to worry about, if you believe in yourself and work hard, I am pretty sure you can succeed anyway. Also, scoring 'As' is probably not the best indicator to predict future success in life. Though, it does help to get a few 'As' on your scroll, because it could at least help you to get an interview with a top company. Why didn't I think of that earlier!



## REFLECTION

Some argue that *'Teachers or lecturers join the academic world (of theory), because they are failures in the real (practical) world.'* Such statements often drive academic staff nuts (even if it is sometimes true!), and brings laughter to students. Anyway, we don't need to go into this discussion here, because it will probably lead to no constructive alignment.

Instead, we could ask ourselves, "*why do we like to brag about our achievements?*" Do you brag? I certainly do, but I usually feel kind of stupid when I realize it. But then again, we forget fast, because it is always nice to feel appreciated and important. The best thing is when someone else praises us about our work. But if none do, we could always do it ourselves.

The best thing about teaching and bragging is that we are guaranteed an audience, which will probably just look in shock and awe (some will already be sleeping!). I mean, no sane student is going to stand up, and tell the lecturer, "*Give us a break from your pathetic achievements, and please get on with the class!*" And unless one or a few students make it clear sooner or later, the lecturer will probably continue semester after semester, year after year. Interestingly, the stories will become more amazing and exciting every time they are told. There might even be 2-3 new versions every semester, especially if the lecturer is teaching more than one section. Certainly, lecturers that have a lot of experiences relevant to the topic discussed should share them with the class. However, we should also ask ourselves *whether we are doing it to assist our students to understand the learning content better, or emphasize an important point, or are we doing it to boost our ego.* Perhaps we do it for both reasons.

If you think that your achievements are so great, perhaps you should watch a few [TED Talks](#) to put your achievements in a global perspective (do a bit of benchmarking, please!).

In my opinion, the greatness of a lecturer does not lie in what he (or she) has personally achieved. Instead, a great lecturer is a person who is able to consistently *facilitate AHA-moments in students (Oh, now I understand!) and inspire (or trigger) them to explore and discover their true potential.*



To sum up, Dr. Brag was actually a very knowledgeable and experienced lecturer, but his habit of bragging was something that was in my opinion more destructive than constructive in motivating students and facilitating learning.

Do you brag in class (or at work)? Has it become a habit beyond control? Think about it! It doesn't take much effort to change. I am trying, but I want to be appreciated and feel important! Unless I tell them, they will never respect me, recognize my amazing talent, and look up to me. What was the agenda again?

"Develop success from failures.  
Discouragement and failure are  
two of the surest stepping stones to  
success."

- Dale Carnegie



## 18. IS POWERPOINT EVIL? (PART 3)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/05/is-powerpoint-evil-part-3.html>



"It's the way people depend on all those **bells and whistles** that come with the software to try to shore up a weak presentation."

- [Chris Oakes \(1998\)](#)

"...To critics, PowerPoint serves largely the same role in the classroom as pre-processed snack food does in the lunchroom: a conveniently packaged morsel that looks good but doesn't match the intellectual or corporeal nourishment of, say, a critical essay or a plate of steamed spinach."

- [Joanna Glasner \(2002\)](#)

"The practical conclusions are clear. PowerPoint is a competent slide manager and projector. But rather than supplementing a presentation, it has become a substitute for it. Such misuse ignores the most important rule of speaking: **Respect your audience.**"

- [Edward Tufte \(2003\)](#)

"The use of the PowerPoint presentation has been a disaster...**It should be ditched.**"

- [Professor Sweller \(2007\)](#)



## IS POWERPOINT EVIL?

[Edward Tufte \(2003\)](#) even explains in his "The Visual Display of Quantitative Information" book, how PowerPoint **caused the destruction of the space shuttle Columbia in 2003**. I suppose PowerPoint is evil! Wait a minute! Isn't also the Internet evil! What about chocolate? Yes, cars are certainly evil! Motor bikes are even worse! Certainly, sex is evil! Actually, everything I can think of is evil!

Should we **blame PowerPoint on our own failure to create compelling content and engage students to learn**? Or perhaps PowerPoint is the problem as it lacks the features needed to enable us to express ourselves effectively (Perhaps we should use Apple's Keynote)? Or is it a combination? Perhaps we could blame the students? We could probably ask questions and argue all day long without getting anywhere. If I was a psychologist, I would probably use the famous statement that is practically used for every argument: "It depends." And for this case, I would probably have to agree.

But instead of getting into a logical and/or emotional argument about the constructiveness or destructiveness of PowerPoint, I will instead put on my student experience goggles, immerse myself into my learning mind, and transport myself back to a blended learning graduate course I took a few years back entitled '**System Analysis & Design**', which was a learning experience worth sharing and reflecting. For the name protection sake, I will simply call my lecturer, **Dr. PowerPoint**.

## READING SLIDES

"...Lecturers **who know nothing else except their PowerPoint slides...**They are just PowerPoint notes, not process. They have no stories, no biographies, no histories..."

- [Professor Bajunid \(2005\)](#)

As this was a blended learning course, we only had eight (8) 2-hour tutorials with Dr. PowerPoint. Four tutorials were conducted online (using Centra) and four were conducted face-to-face (F2F). Interestingly, we had to **cover 17 topics** in this 'System Analysis & Design' course, which means theoretically we had to cover around 2 topics per class. Although, we had 17 topics to cover, it was relieving to know that we had PowerPoint to rescue us from the giant book (It takes you one page to fall asleep!).



As usual, Dr. PowerPoint would always be late for the F2F tutorials (4 out of 4!). The great thing was that we always finished classes early, too. ***Start late, finish early!*** Please, tell me a student who wouldn't love that? ME! I remember one class, she was around 15 minutes late, and managed to cover 3 topics and complete the tutorial (or lecture!) 15 minutes before time. It was amazing; it was like watching Speedy Gonzales swoosh through the slides.

What is wrong with that? Just imagine. We come to class, and then we watch Dr. PowerPoint read the bullets out loud for 1 1/2 hour. As she was late and had to cover 3 topics this time, she rushed more than usual. The best part was when we reached areas in the slides that she thought we could read on our own. She would ironically say, "***Oh, this part is easy! You can read this at home!***" One poor student had to travel for 3 hours to attend these tutorials, and that is what he gets. Come on! This is a graduate course (Masters!), and that is what we get!

And you know what, several of my graduate courses that I took, followed the same PowerPoint reading routine and pattern. If the PowerPoint slides were more attractive, engaging and stimulating, it would at least provide some fun during the learning process. Just watching bullets and text can get kind of boring after a while, especially if the lecturer can't read properly. Actually, that part was really funny. Sometimes we would come to certain parts of the slides, which Dr. PowerPoint read out incorrectly, or seemed not to understand what she read. How is that possible? Well, since all the topics of the book come with slides, I suppose the lecturer conveniently used them (guessing here!). Come on, be prepared at least!

Today it is so easy to be a lecturer, if we use this formula:

1. No need to prepare content (slides come with the book)
2. Come to class
3. Read the slides out loud
4. Ask at the end of the class: "Any questions?"
5. No questions (needed, students got the PowerPoint slides!)
6. The END (of learning!)

Come on! In short, PowerPoint is evil! Wait a minute! Can we blame PowerPoint for this?



## MEMORIZING SLIDES

Does reading and memorizing PowerPoint slides facilitate learning? How do you measure learning? Assessment! If we use written exams as a measure, I can share with you that with some of the subjects I took; ***I could amazingly score an 'A' by basically reading and memorizing the slides.*** Why bother reading the book, when we can score 'good' grades by simply reading and memorizing the PowerPoint slides! Strangely, when I engrossed myself in a subject (reading and reflecting the book and required materials), my exam results seemed to suffer. I suppose information overload enabled me to forget the key points needed to score an 'A'. Luckily I learned a few tricks from my Bosnian friend. This guy never really studied, and he always did very well on exams. What was his secret? When he saw me one day stressed out preparing for exams, he told me to ***read a book that would unleash the genius in me*** (or help me score good grades without much effort): [Quantum Learning](#). After reading that book, I learned a few cool tricks (Not telling! read it!) and exams became a breeze, but learning seemed to suffer.

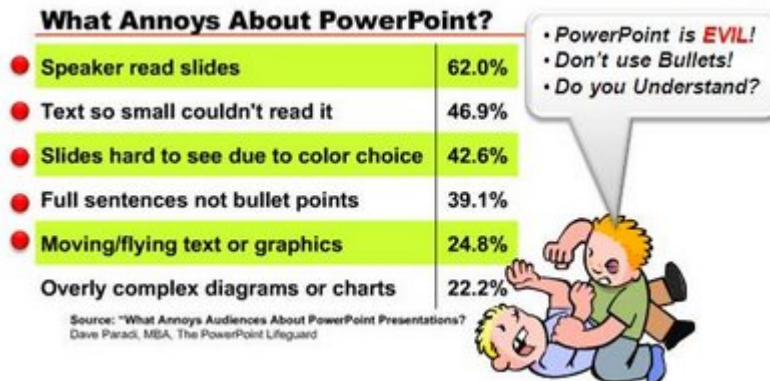
In the end, I decided to sacrifice a few 'As' for the sake of learning. Not kidding! If we were required to take the same exam again a few months (or weeks!) after the semester was completed, it wouldn't surprise me if we fail, or at least get a much worse grade. It is strange! I thought that when you learned something, it sticks (for a while!). Just like learning to ride a bicycle. I suppose some formal courses are more complex.

## THE FIVE MINUTE UNIVERSITY!

The idea is that in five minutes you learn what the average college graduate remembers five years after he or she has graduated. [Father Guido Sarducci's Five Minute University](#) (video) is probably applicable until today for some courses out there (Too much focus on memorization!). If it is still happening in some of your courses, *use this incredibly funny video to spice up the discussion about effective learning.*

[Father Guido Sarducci's Five Minute University](#) video could bring to light the seriousness with a bit of laughter. Actually, I have now watched it more than a dozen times, and I am still laughing (and crying!). Then, we can together laugh a bit at ourselves, and move on to more effective teaching, facilitation and learning.

## EFFECTIVE LEARNING



Today, millions of people around the world use presentation tools like PowerPoint to create content to persuade, explain, illustrate and facilitate learning. So, until something better comes along that appeal to the masses, we might as well do the best with what we have. Anyway, if you ask me, I would argue that PowerPoint is actually a constructive tool to facilitate learning, if you know how to use it (Still learning!). If you don't know how to use it, it can also be a very destructive tool (Same goes for any other learning tool!).

Now, I am not going to give you a written lecture on how to get it right. The reason is that I want you to learn from the real masters in preparing and giving presentations (or lectures). Learn from them, and then reflect, adapt, and do your own thing. First, here are a few wonderful PowerPoint resource sites to explore:

- ❑ [PowerPoint - On-Line Technology Practice Modules](#)  
A comprehensive directory of links (URLs) to tutorials, sites, game templates and articles on how to use PowerPoint effectively.
- ❑ [Sonia Coleman's Digital Studio](#)  
Free PowerPoint templates and tutorials!
- ❑ [PowerPoint 2007 Tutorials](#) (Florida Gulf Coast University)  
Including graphics, tables, charts, formatting text, printing and slide effects.
- ❑ [PowerPoint Tutorials \(Wikivid\)](#)  
PowerPoint tutorials are broken down by topic so that you can navigate the list to find exactly what you need or watch them all from start to finish to become a PowerPoint expert.



Alright, that is the macro stuff. What about some ***super tips on creating compelling presentation slides?***

Have you heard of **Tom Kuhlmann**? Check out his [Rapid eLearning Blog](#), which shares practical tips and tricks on creating excellent presentation slides. Also, download his free 46-page ebook: [The Insider's Guide to Becoming a Rapid E-Learning Pro](#). It is an amazing resource that could spark your slides to life. He has already more than 21,000 subscribed readers (free!), so perhaps it is time to become one, too!

Great, but I want to see one example of great presentation slides? [Death by PowerPoint](#) (Alexei Kapterev). Also, you might want to check out an example of presentation slides for a full-blown course: [Critical Thinking](#) (links to all the slides are included in the article). Oops, that is my article and slides. Just had to! It is not great, but I am kind of satisfied with it. I think you will actually find it quite interesting, too :)

To see many more examples, I would advise you to explore [Slideshare](#), which is an amazing repository of both excellent and poor presentation slides. If you need some inspiration to create engaging slides that is a great starting point.

Alright, great stuff! But, I want ***a learning resource to inspire me to become a great presenter?***

Have you heard of **Garr Reynolds**? Check this out: [Google Talk - Presentation Zen](#). Presentation Zen challenges the conventional wisdom of making "slide presentations" in today's world and encourages you to think differently and more creatively about the preparation, design, and delivery of your presentations. Watch and Learn!

Did you like it? If you did, you could always explore his juicy blog for further nourishment: [Presentation Zen](#)

By the way, [PowerPoint Extreme Makeover](#) by Dean Shareski, is another excellent recorded lecture worth watching a couple of times (At least 3!). While you are getting into the groove, you could also watch: [How To Create a Great PowerPoint without Breaking the Law](#), by Alvin Trusty.

That is cool! But what if ***I don't want to use presentation slides, and simply want to inspire my students to learn.*** Any examples to benchmark myself with? [Do Schools Kill Creativity?](#), by





Ken Robinson is one great example. If you want many more, [TED Talks](#) is simply an amazing learning adventure.

Here are two incredible TED talks by Hans Rosling that I wouldn't want to miss:

- ❑ [Debunks Myths about the so-called "Developing World"](#) (2006)
- ❑ [New Insights on Poverty and Life around the World](#) (2007)

Now, if you are teaching statistics or need to visualize your data, Hans Rosling with his [Gapminder](#) is certainly a great role model or benchmark. Although, Gapminder is a great data visualization tool, it was Hans Rosling's passionate, energetic, and inspirational talk that really blew me away (I mean in learning terms!). He is what I call a great presenter!

While you are at TED talks, check out Jill Bolte Taylor's inspiring talk: [Stroke of insight](#). She uses a real brain to make a point. I am not kidding! Now, that is an attention (brain) grabber!

Wait a minute! I am a lecturer, and I teach physics. I mean, how engaging can you be with such an inherently boring course? Well, perhaps [Professor Lewin](#) could teach you a trick or two.

Whether you use PowerPoint (Windows), Keynote (Apple), [OpenOffice](#), or no presentation tool at all, there are endless of possibilities of what you can do to create compelling content, and engage the student's mind to learn.

Yes, PowerPoint or presentation slides can be destructive (and perhaps even evil at times!). But with a bit of creativity and flavor, I believe presentation slides can assist in facilitating effective learning, and awaken our creative side to express ourselves beyond words.

However, if your content is poor, no fancy design or flying dogs are going to save you. Get the substance content right, be creative and passionate, and engage your students with a lot of relevant and challenging learning activities and mind boggling puzzles (embed them within the presentation slides). However, remember: ***If you are hopeless (Can't read, write or talk!), teaching is going to get tough, no matter how cool your slides are.*** Even if you are a hopeless teacher, don't worry! If you have the desire and passion to learn, you can overcome all your weaknesses, and nurture them into strengths. Learn, practice, reflect, improve, practice, reflect, etc.



So, is PowerPoint evil? I don't know, and I don't care (Got better things to reflect)! Since we are stuck with it for now until something better comes along (I kind of like it anyway, so no worries mate!), we better focus instead on how to make the most of it to facilitate engaging and effective learning :)

*"Of course, PowerPoint is not inherently evil, it is just poorly used..."*

- Stephen Downes

## 19. NO STUPID QUESTIONS! I AM SERIOUS! (PART 4)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/05/no-stupid-questions-i-am-serious-part-4.html>



***“Some people study all their life and at their death they have learned everything except to  
THINK”***

*– Francois Domergue*

***“A person who asks questions is a person who thinks.”***

*- William Wilen*

In this 5-part learning series, we have already looked at several teaching habits that could inspire students out of learning, such as **speed-teaching**, **bragging**, **lack of engagement**, and **slide reading**. In part four (4), we will explore a couple of teaching habits that could be quite destructive to the students' learning process.

First, I will project myself back-to-the-past to my **high school days in Norway**, and reflect a few learning experiences that I still can't get out of my head (Perhaps after sharing them with you, they can rest in peace on the web!). After that, I will reflect a few more incidents from my graduate days in Malaysia.



The thing about my schooling experience in Norway, whether it was primary, secondary or high school, is that many of *my teachers seemed so miserable and frustrated with their lives*. I kind of got the feeling that the majority of the teachers I experienced, never really wanted to be teachers, but became so, because they failed in their first choice careers. I hope that I am wrong about this (Faulty memory!) and that things have changed for the better at the schools I studied (Marienlyst and Ullern). Let's transport myself back to the past...

### THE SPIDER...

I can't remember the name of the teacher, nor can I remember the subject that she taught (high school subject). However, I do remember that she would always come to class with a serious and angry face carrying a big sulk. It was as if she hated us (probably herself, too!). Her serious and angry face could wipe your smile off with the blink of an eye.

As for me, I dreaded going to her classes. Not only did she look serious and angry, she also had a great pleasure of giving us impromptu oral tests during classes. Although, I actually support these kinds of instructional approaches to encourage students to prepare for class, I believe she also had other hidden reasons for giving us such tests. She seemed to get pleasure out of giving us a **BIG ZERO** (out of 5, if I remember correctly!) when we couldn't answer her questions.

This is how it worked: She would ask a question in class, and then students would raise their right hand if they knew the answer. Nope, she would not pick any of the raised hands, but instead she would pick one student who didn't raise the hand. And obviously that student would struggle, or not be able to answer the question. Then she would suddenly decide that this is an impromptu oral test and write a big zero in her grade book. And naturally I would get a big zero the first couple of times, but then after a few classes I would raise my hand even if I didn't know the answer. It at least saved me from a few zeros.

So, naturally many students hated her guts, and wanted to take their own revenge in a less psychological damaging way! And one day a few students brought a quite big spider (Norwegian standards!) to class (I am not sure where it can from). They placed it on the top of the teacher's desk; smack in the middle. Although, I was not involved in this silly little prank, I did witness it. We all expected that the teacher would freak out and scream for help, but 'Oh Boy' were we wrong.



That day she came to class holding a book in her right hand. While walking towards her desk, she spotted the spider. She initially screamed a bit in a freakish manner, and then ***she lifted her book with both hands and slammed that spider several times until it was completely crushed and dead.*** Then she picked it up with a face of rage and disgust and walked to nearest classroom window. She opened the classroom window, and threw it out! After this incident she began the class as if it never happened.

"Who cares! People on 'Fear Factor' eat them alive all the time!" Yes, I also have a small phobia for spiders, and I really don't like them. But somehow for that spider I wouldn't have mind risking my phobia to save it. It was a bizarre moment and murder that I probably will never forget. So, next time you want to pull a prank on your annoying and serious teacher, think twice about using living creatures, because you never know. It is not worth the risk!

Dear spider, may you rest in peace! Hopefully, we can learn a lesson or two from this story.

### **NO STUPID QUESTIONS!**

Hopefully, the spider incident can rest in peace (from my mind!), and let's move on. For the next habit or behavior, I am not going to zoom in on a particular teacher, but reflect how destructive some teachers can be in discouraging students to ask questions without often realizing it (I suppose I am guilty, too!).

It is strange that I need to talk about this topic in the 21st century, but I still come across teachers or lecturers that would do all sorts of things or tricks to avoid questions in class. Is it their lack of preparedness for the topic that causes this? Or perhaps they are scared to lose control? Maybe, it is that fear of not knowing the answer to a question? Perhaps they don't want to put themselves in a position, which could make them look stupid? Or is it simply a cultural or authority issue that we can't do much about (except educate the next generation).

Here is a list of statements or questions that could discourage students from asking questions during class:

- ☐ Please don't ask stupid questions!
- ☐ That is a stupid question! Any other questions?
- ☐ That was not a good question! Ask proper questions!
- ☐ Anyone got a better question!

- ☐ Haven't you read the book!
- ☐ Please read the book before asking questions!
- ☐ I don't entertain such questions! You can find the answer easily in the book!
- ☐ I have already told you that! Aren't you listening!
- ☐ Didn't I make that clear just know!
- ☐ I just answered you that question!
- ☐ Are you making fun of me!
- ☐ What! How many times do I have to explain it, before you get it!
- ☐ We don't have time for this question! Please find the answer on your own.
- ☐ Think before you ask!

These are some of the statements or questions that I experienced from some of my lecturers during my undergraduate and graduate studies in Malaysia. Don't get me wrong, I had many good lecturers during these years too, but this series is about the bad experiences.



### **POSSIBILITIES!**

Whether we do it consciously or not, we should think a bit before making statements that might indirectly or directly discourage students from asking questions. If no one is asking questions in your class, you might actually be part of the problem. For example, some might argue that Malaysian students don't usually ask questions in class, or that they are happy with a one-way lecture approach. "No thinking required, just need to look awake! Anyway I got the slides, so there is no need to really listen."





However, all students have subject related questions, and I believe it is up to the lecturer to explore creative ways on how to encourage more students to ask these questions to facilitate the learning process. If you ask me, no matter how resistant students are to asking questions and participating in discussions, there are ways to overcome it. In short, if you are creative, passionate and encouraging you can unlock any student to ask questions.

Alright, I am not going to give you a written lecture of the importance and secret recipe of nurturing the students' mind to ask and reflect questions and ideas (Not qualified yet!). Instead, I will link you up with **a few videos for you to reflect**. The videos below are also excellent for stimulating discussion with your colleagues on how the world of technology, knowledge and learning is evolving, and the necessary changes we need to carry out to facilitate effective learning, and nurture the foundation for students to succeed in the 21st century. Here we go:

❑ [Shift Happens](#)

The impact of ICT and globalization on education. It provides some interesting things to ponder regarding globalization and fast evolving changes we need to consider as we plan and prepare students for the future.

❑ [Pay Attention](#)

This presentation, simply entitled Pay Attention, was created by Darren Draper in an effort to motivate teachers to more effectively use technology in their teaching.

❑ [Five Minute University](#)

Father Guido Sarducci teaches what an average college graduate knows after five years from graduation in five minutes. A great video to facilitate discussion about effective learning with a bit of humor.

❑ ["Do Schools Kill Creativity"](#)

Sir Ken Robinson makes an entertaining and profoundly moving case for creating an education system that nurtures (rather than undermines) creativity.

❑ ["Web 2.0 ... The Machine is Using Us"](#)

The evolution of knowledge creation, management and sharing in creative and stimulating way.

❑ [Teaching Teaching & Understanding Understanding](#)

A 19-minute award-winning short-film about teaching at the University. It shows examples of good and bad teaching, and promotes constructive alignment learning approach using Solo Taxonomy to test students' level of understanding (deep understanding?).

❑ [Five Minds for the Future](#)



Howard Gardner speaks about his book, Five Minds for the Future explaining why, in the future, it will be important to develop five kinds of minds, both in school and in other educational environments.

In addition to these interesting videos, here are a few sites that can stimulate some new ideas on how to facilitate effective learning in your course:

❑ [Route 21](#)

A one-stop-resource center for 21st century skills-related information, resources and community tools. You can even find videos here of 21st century skills in action in today's classrooms.

❑ [New Horizons for Learning](#)

Presents articles and information on special issues in education, from restructuring schools to technology and adult education.

❑ [EDUCAUSE](#)

A nonprofit association whose mission is to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. You can find hundreds of interesting resources, research papers and articles exploring everything from Second Life to lecturing.

❑ [Creativity Techniques](#)

A central repository for Creativity and Innovation on the Internet by Mycoted with a summary of tools, techniques, mind exercises, puzzles, book reviews, etc. Concise, precise and easy to digest. I love it!

❑ [Mind Tools](#)

More than 100 free essential life, career training and management training skill-builder articles and tools to explore.

❑ [Successful Learning](#)

This e-book discusses philosophies of learning, thinking skills, presentations skills, learning strategies, e-Learning, motivation, reading/writing skills and learning styles. Published by CDTL, National University of Singapore.

❑ [Brain Rules](#)

12 principles for surviving and thriving at work, home, and school. In Brain Rules, Dr. John Medina, a molecular biologist, shares his lifelong interest in how the brain sciences might influence the way we teach our children and the way we work.

❑ [Critical Thinking Web](#)



Provides over 100 free online tutorials on critical thinking, logic, scientific reasoning, creativity, and other aspects of thinking skills. This site is maintained by Dr. Joe Lau at the Philosophy Department, The University of Hong Kong.

❑ [Critical Evaluation Toolkit](#)

Griffith University provides tips on helping students to develop critical evaluation skills.

❑ [Argumentation and Critical Thinking Tutorial](#)

The tutorials consist of a series of tests to help reinforce your knowledge and understanding of some basic concepts associated with making arguments and thinking critically (Humboldt State University).

❑ [Empowering the 21st Century Superintendent](#)

Of all the challenges you face as a superintendent, technology leadership may be the one that leaves you feeling the most unprepared, uncertain and vulnerable. This site provides you with a lot of valuable resources and ideas on how to deal with it.

❑ [Interactive Thinking Tools](#)

Intel provides online tools designed to promote higher-order thinking in any subject. Each tool features an online workspace where students create and save visual representations of their thinking.

❑ [CoRT & Six Thinking Hats](#)

Two wonderful thinking tools by Edward de Bono, which we can use in the classroom, at work, or any place where we need to collaboratively solve problems, make decisions, and nurture innovative ideas.

❑ [Work-Learning Research](#)

Dr. Will Thalheimer's goal has been to compile research from the world's preeminent refereed journals and translate that research with practical wisdom to help learning professionals create more effective learning. Check it out!

❑ [WebQuest](#)

Is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web.

Finally, here is an article I wrote a couple of months back entitled: [Coaching Critical Thinking to Think Creatively!](#), which might also be useful.



## A FEW TIPS!

*"Take your course seriously! Take course preparation seriously! Take learning seriously! Take assessment seriously! Take your students seriously!"*

***But don't take yourself seriously!"***

*- Zaid Ali Alsagoff*

Better yet, have fun making fun of yourself during class, and make it a point that we all do mistakes. Anyway, the greatness of a lecturer or a leader is not whether he or she does a mistake (surely will!), but how he or she responds to it. If you are not doing any mistakes or failing once a while, you are perhaps not trying hard enough. Finally, celebrate students who ask you questions, even if you don't know the answer. Not only will they inspire you to learn and get a deeper understanding of the subject, they will also ***nurture you to become a better lecturer.***

We all say funny things and ask stupid questions in our short life on this planet, but if we learn from them and move on we might just... :)

***"Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You're crazy."***

*-Drillers who Edwin L. Drake tried to enlist to his project to drill for oil in 1859.*

***"Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible."***

*-Lord Kelvin, president, Royal Society, 1895*

***"Everything that can be invented has been invented."***

*-Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents, 1899.*

***"Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?"***

*-H. M. Warner, Warner Brothers, 1927.*

***"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."***

*- Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943*

***"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."***

*- Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949*

***"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."***

*-Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977*

***"640K ought to be enough for anybody."***

*- Bill Gates, 1981*

***"If at first, the idea is not absurd, there is no hope for it."***

*- Albert Einstein*

## 20. SHOW UP TO THROW UP! 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY THINKING? (PART 5)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/07/show-up-to-throw-up-21st-century.html>



"The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education".

– **Albert Einstein**

"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."

– **Bill Gates**

"Education is the process in which we discover that learning adds quality to our lives.

Learning must be experienced."

– **William Glasser**

In this 5-part learning series, we have already looked at several teaching habits that could inspire students out of learning, which I am not going to repeat here (read and synthesize the other parts, if you want to know!). In this last part or episode (for sure!), we will explore one of the greatest challenges in teaching today, which is assessing the potential and ability of the student. This time around, I will zoom back to my secondary and high-school days in Norway to share with you some nutty, but useful stories to reflect and draw lessons from.

### THE WHITE PAPER!

In secondary school or 7th grade (Norwegian style!), we had a **music teacher who was a failed singer**. Her voice was simply horrible, but that did not stop her from singing in every class. She would always scold me when I did not sing along, and when I did sing along she would scold me



even more for not following the tune. Until today, I still hate singing. Although, I don't blame her fully, she certainly had some impact on my fear for singing.

In general, I believe sincerely that she hated my guts, and fully deserved to as I was no cup of tea either. She always reminded me how much better my big brother was. As I had a reputation to keep (at that time!) that was fine by me.

However, what struck me until today was not really her singing (or mine for that sake!), but the way she would test our knowledge level on music and instruments. For example, she would hand out to us a piece of paper with definitions of several instruments and then ask us to memorize it for the next class. In the next class, she would give us a blank piece of paper and ask us to basically rewrite the whole paper again without referring to it. Then she would mark us based on how much we had memorized.

No doubt memory and memorization is important today too, but perhaps if we were asked to play and learn an instrument, or be able to discuss our feelings, preferences and experiences with instruments, we might have learned more. Coming to think of it, such exams are not much different from what we often get today. The only major difference is that we have a few hundred pages and a few dozen questions to digest before the exam.

Hmm, let's move on to the next story before we close this learning series adventure for good.

## **BRAVO!**

The second learning reflection journey takes me back to my French language classes in high school. Now, my French teacher was a person that could **outshine Mr. Bean any day**. I really felt sorry for this old dude. Not only did he have extremely poor eye-sight and hearing, he was also a real nerve rack. You get kind of stressed out by just looking at him.

In many ways, he was a legend in the making. The rumor has it that he once mistook a sandwich for a blackboard eraser (a student prank!), and then tried to clean the blackboard with it. Students used to always pull pranks on him, such as putting a lot of mayonnaise on the door knob. He would fall for it every time. But he was a good sport, and would continue class as if nothing had happened, every time.



Though, it did not stop there! Since he had poor eyesight, he would map out the students in the classroom on a piece of paper, enabling him to know where who sat. By doing so, he could easily keep track of the students in the class. Or perhaps not! Students being students would always change their positions and he would simply go nuts, reminding us to sit in the same place every class. Some students would also sneak out during class while he was teaching. If he asked questions to missing students, other students would quickly answer on the students' behalf.

The most memorable funny incident was even posted in the students' yearbook that year. Since I witnessed it with my bear eyes, I can testify that it really happened. What happened?



During one class while the French teacher was lecturing, one student decided to sneak out. However, this time around the student was really creative. He put his chair (upside down) on the table and then covered it with his thick winter jacket, and sneaked out quietly. Later during the class, the French teacher decided to ask the missing student a question. Oh man, we thought he was busted this time around! The French teacher asked the question, but no one answered. Then he went closer to the missing student's desk (probably about 3 meters from it) and asked again, but still no one answered. Alright, now he is busted! But then the teacher said (in Norwegian), "Oh Christian has decided to be quiet today. Usually, he is so talkative. Alright, can anyone else answer the question?"

We all looked stunned at one another in disbelief. Is this teacher for real? I suppose he discovered what really happened in the students' yearbook (Hmm, not sure teachers read such books). Or perhaps he always knew, but acted as if nothing had happened (as usual!). Nope, I doubt it!



But then again, nothing could beat his class test or exams. In general, you usually find a few students cheating when there are exams. However, in his class I would argue that **90%+ of the students cheated on his exams**. In other words, it is difficult to find students that don't cheat on his exams.

The French language book we used for the course also had an accompanying 'Teacher Guide'. The 'Teacher Guide' included sample test questions and answers. Interestingly, our amazing French teacher would basically copy/paste questions for our exams from this guide. Students being book wise knew that the 'Teacher Guide' is also sold in the bookstore without hassle. Need I say any more!

Since this amazing teacher could hardly see or hear, students would bring the 'Teacher Guide' to the exam, and answer the questions with flying colors. You might be thinking, 'Did you also cheat?'. I am sad to say... Not only did students bring the guide, but they also placed it on the table as if it was an open book exam. Of course, the French teacher never saw or heard any unusual sounds during the photocopying session. Some bright students would deliberately write a few mistakes, or customize things that were easy to change. At least it did not look too obvious.

I once got a '**BRAVO**' comment in my exam, and he was really impressed with my answers. I was thinking that the only one that should be getting 'Bravo' is the teacher's ability (or ignorance) to figure out what was going on.

Looking back, I had wished I would have focused more on learning French than just thinking about scoring for the exam. Today, I probably remember less than 10 French words or phrases. And that is after 2 semesters of learning French. What a disaster! But then again after watching [Father Guido Sarducci's Five Minute University](http://fatherguido.com/) it begins to make sense.

In the final analysis, we educators should do more to construct assessment approaches and measures to minimize the possibility for such things from happening. Indirectly, some of our assessment methods might actually encourage students to cheat.

## THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

If you ask me, [infusing 21st century thinking into the teaching and learning environment](#) is **NOT** the ultimate learning challenge. These things can be learned and embedded reasonably fast. However, infusing more constructive and relevant assessment methods might actually be the thing that stops many educators from making the necessary changes to nurture 21st century thinking and inspire students to reach their potentials.

The old assessment paradigm of only one correct answer (whether tick or essay!) is more efficient to implement and requires less thinking on the educator's behalf to administer. But, **how do you measure:**

- ☐ Creativity in an objective manner?
- ☐ Critical thinking in an objective manner?
- ☐ The quality and potential of an idea?
- ☐ An open ended question?
- ☐ An opinion?
- ☐ Potential?
- ☐ Ability?
- ☐ LEARNING?

Today there are several **alternative assessment methods** we can use to minimize our own subjectivity in evaluating our students' creative and innovative work. The fuzzy maps below, provide several assessment and thinking activities to explore, and I will leave it to your 'Googling' to find good materials related to them.





Until now, I have been pumping you with tons of learning resources in this 5-part learning series, but now I will only share two excellent resources to inspire you further:

❑ [Teaching Tips Blog](#)

An excellent venue for inspiration and resources to spark your imagination with new ideas to engage and facilitate effective learning.

❑ [Michael Wesch and the Future of Education](#)

In this presentation, Michael Wesch breaks down his attempts to integrate Facebook, Netvibes, Diigo, Google Apps, Jott, Twitter, and other emerging technologies to create an education portal of the future. Michael Wesch Course Portal (using Netvibes): [Mediated Cultures: Digital Ethnography](#). In addition, you might and should explore his famous "[Web 2.0 ... The Machine is Using Us](#)" video, which explores the evolution of knowledge creation, management and sharing in creative and stimulating way.

I suppose I have come to the end of this **learning psycho therapy**, and I am looking forward now to focus more on the future of learning again. I hope that some of the stories shared can inspire us to reflect our own teaching (although they might be extreme!), and hopefully enable us to weed out things that might inspire students out of learning.

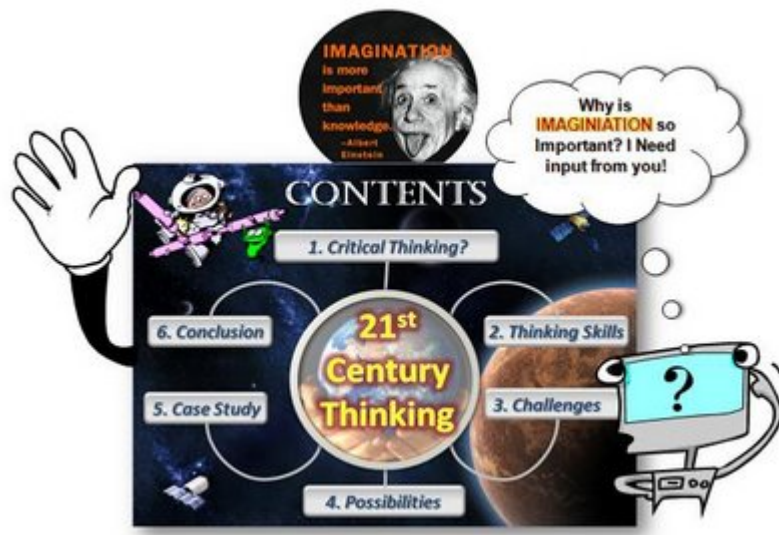
***The more I learn, the dumber I realize I am. It is amazing, humbling and refreshing :)***

***“Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.”***

- Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

## 21. INFUSING 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY THINKING SKILLS INTO THE T&L ENVIRONMENT

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/07/infusing-21st-century-thinking-skills.html>



### THE SECRET

Now, I know '[The Secret](#)', and by believing and practicing the '[LAW OF ATTRACTION](#)', I will one day become the Einstein of the East (Hmm, I am kind of mixed, so that might be a problem)! I watched '[The Secret](#)', and I have to admit that it is the most disappointing secret I have ever discovered. The opening was exciting, but the rest could have been summed up in a minute or two. I am not revealing the secret, but I can tell you that if you believe in it, it might come true. Perhaps, if the movie had really discussed some of the great minds of the past, I would have appreciated it more. Instead, we are listening to a bunch of successful people sharing with us how the secret has changed their life (the Law of Attraction!).

Isn't it obvious ([self-fulfilling prophecy](#)?) that if you are positive, believe in yourself, have passion, visualize your dreams, go for it, etc., you are more likely to succeed (perhaps I come from Mars!). If you ask me, there was nothing new to discover in 'The Secret', except clever branding and promotion. It is probably the most exciting, clever and exotic branding since '[Blue Ocean](#)'. The power of 'The Secret' is not in the law of attraction, but in the word: "SECRET". *Everyone wants*



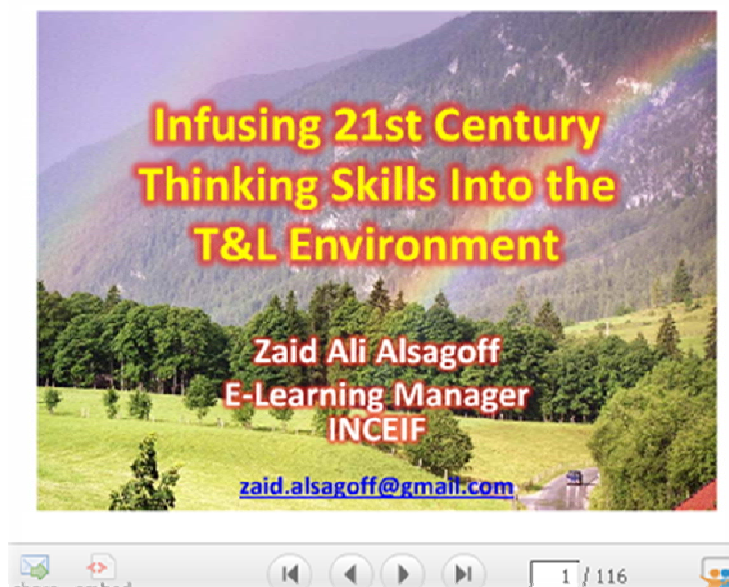
**to know a secret.** In short, every single motivational guru since I don't know when has indirectly promoted the so called secret, but has labeled it in a less exotic and mysterious way.

However, if it can help some of the millions of people that have watched it to achieve their dreams then I suppose it has some value :)

## THE LECTURE

Actually, the real reason I am writing now is not because of the secret, but because ***I want to share with you my presentation slides for a lecture that was never conducted.*** Roughly, a month ago I was invited to be a guest speaker at a major workshop (250 participants!) to conduct a lecture about 'Critical Thinking'. Due to some financial reasons, the workshop was postponed. And since then, I have never conducted this particular lecture. I suppose because no one else knew that I had prepared it. Or perhaps, because I am.... (Use the force! I mean the 'Law of Attraction')

Anyway, here are the presentation slides:



URL: <http://www.slideshare.net/zaid/infusing-21st-century-thinking-skills-into-the-tl-environment/>

This lecture (or presentation slides) explores 21st century challenges and possibilities in infusing learning, thinking, creativity and innovation into the teaching and learning environment.





If the presentation slides do not make any sense, perhaps you ***can invite me to conduct the lecture wherever it may be*** (The first lecture must be conducted face-to-face. Why? I don't know!). Since I am in Malaysia, it might be costly if you want me to conduct the lecture in United States or Alaska. However, if you are Oprah Winfrey or Jay Leno I might consider doing it for free. Sorry David Letterman, for you I will not do it for free.

Now, you are perhaps thinking that I have gone POTTY! Nope, I am simply being positive and realistic about my prospects and practicing the law of attraction :)

On a serious note, after I conduct the first live lecture (if ever! Be positive!), I will ***record an e-lecture using Adobe Presenter*** to enlighten (who ever reads my blog!) what I am trying to reveal in the presentation slides.

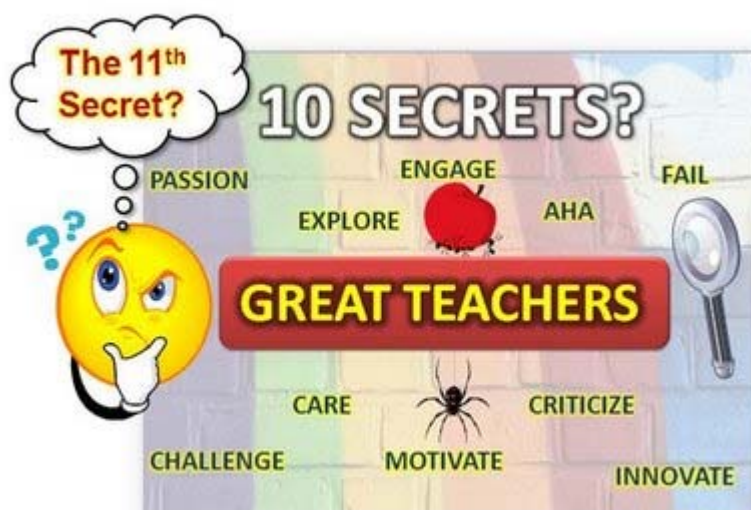
Until the first live lecture, it will remain a secret. Just exploring the power of 'The Secret' :)

" If you don't fail at least 90 percent  
of the time, you're not aiming high  
enough."

- Chris Crawford



## 22. 10 SECRETS TO GREAT TEACHING



These '**10 secrets to great teaching**' are too secret to be revealed here in writing, so please watch the 2 videos below to learn more. In a secret shell, these ten secrets reveal some of the key ingredients (characteristics, traits, behaviors, and attitudes) needed to become a great teacher. The 10 keywords associated with the 10 secrets are highlighted in the graphic above. Have fun discovering the secrets :)

### SECRET LINKS

Part 1 (10 min video): <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7247058817399539977&hl=en>

Part 2 (20 min video): <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=2406253023381279030&hl=en>

Presentation Slides: <http://www.slideshare.net/zaid/10-secrets-to-great-teaching/>

## GALAXY 3: STORIES

# REMEMBER!

**“If keeping someone’s attention in a lecture was a business, it would have an 80% failure rate.”**

**- Dr. John Medina**



Source: <http://www.brainrules.net/>

## 23. WARREN BUFFETT'S MBA TALK VS EVOLUTION OF DANCE

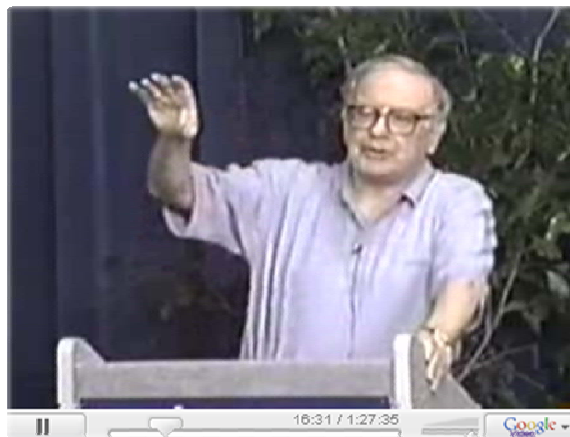
Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/09/warren-buffetts-mba-talk-vs-evolution.html>

### WHO?

Warren Edward Buffett (b. August 30, 1930, Omaha, Nebraska), often called the "Sage of Omaha" or the "Oracle of Omaha", is an American investor, businessperson and philanthropist (\$30 billion donation to Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation!). Buffett has amassed an enormous fortune from astute investments managed through the holding company Berkshire Hathaway, of which he is the largest shareholder and CEO. With an estimated current net worth of around US\$52 billion, he was ranked by Forbes as the second-richest person in the world as of September 2007, behind Bill Gates ([Wikipedia](#)).

### WARREN BUFFETT MBA TALK?

This (FREE) Google Video Warren Buffett MBA Talk (made before a graduating MBA class at University of Florida), is simply a must for anyone studying, doing, or planning to do business. You might hate him or love him, but certainly you can spare 1 1/2 hours of your life to learn from his amazing razor sharp wisdom and advice in investment, finance, business and life in general. If you want a more instructionally chunked version (6-12 minute parts) you can always enjoy the [10 part series](#) on YouTube. Here is the Google Video version, if you missed it:



Video URL (1 hr 28 min): <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6231308980849895261>

### WISDOM OF THE CROWDS?

Amazingly, *Warren Buffett's MBA Talk* on Google Video has only been viewed **+98,000 times** (since September 04, 2006). I suppose it sounds a lot, but if you compare it to the most viewed



video on YouTube (at the moment), it has roughly 600 times less views. Believe it or not, the six minute [Evolution of Dance](#) has until now got **more than 59 MILLION views** (since April 06, 2006). Alright, I got to admit it is really funny, and even I have used it during a few workshops and classes to loosen up the participants with a bit of laughter! One might also argue that the Google Video version is too long (88 minutes) to get so many views, but the chunked version on YouTube has even got fewer views. The [Buffett MBA Talk Part 1](#) has until now only got +38,000 views (since May 23, 2007), and that is more than any of the other 9 parts.

Let's look at it from another angle. The [Worldwide MBA registration](#) figures for the council's Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), used by 1,700 business schools worldwide in the admission process, were 241,662 in December 2006, up from 238,706 a year earlier and 227,490 in December 2004. For example, if we assume that there are approximately 1 million MBA students around the world today, only 1 out of 10 would have watched this video on Google Video. Hmm, let's hope that this video has been watched in crowds or been downloaded and shared using other tools. Also, I wouldn't be surprised that most of those that have viewed it are not even MBA students (including me!).

### WHO CARES!

To sum up, this is only one example (of many) excellent free online learning resources out there that are not being fully utilized by the global intelligence learning network. *The world of the Internet has an unbelievable amount of learning treasures, but we often get distracted by all the other fun and junk.* It is alright to have a bit of fun, but we should also spare some time for great learning adventures like the Warren Buffett MBA Talk. Actually, ***ALL educational programs should make it a requirement in their curriculum to watch, listen and collaboratively reflect such talks or resources.*** We should focus more on the people behind the theories and practices than simply learning what their outputs are made of, and how they are being used or practiced. In other words, it is very important to reflect the masterminds or geniuses' life stories, and their struggles and trials leading them to their theories, practices, inventions and innovations. By doing so, we will also appreciate their efforts and lessons learned more.

Warren Buffett is one of those geniuses worth reading about, watching, listening and learning from :)

## 24. FROM PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS TO CEO OF GOOGLE

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/10/from-public-speaking-class-to-ceo-of.html>

### WHO?

Eric Emerson Schmidt, PhD (born 1955 in Washington, D.C.) is **Chairman and CEO of Google Inc** and a member of the Board of Directors of Apple Inc. In contrast to Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, he has a strong (formal) educational background, including a PhD in Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences (EECS) from the University of California, Berkeley (1982). Schmidt started of his working career as research staff for Xerox. In 1983, Schmidt joined Sun Microsystems as software manager. At Sun he led the development of Java, Sun's platform-independent programming technology (Microsoft or Dot NET's arch-rival?), and defined Sun's Internet software strategy. He later became chief technology officer and corporate executive officer. From 1997 to 2001, Schmidt was CEO of Novell. In 2001, Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin (with the assistance of executive search firm Heidrick & Struggles, Inc.) recruited Eric Schmidt to run their company under the influence of venture capitalists John Doerr and Michael Moritz ([Source](#)).

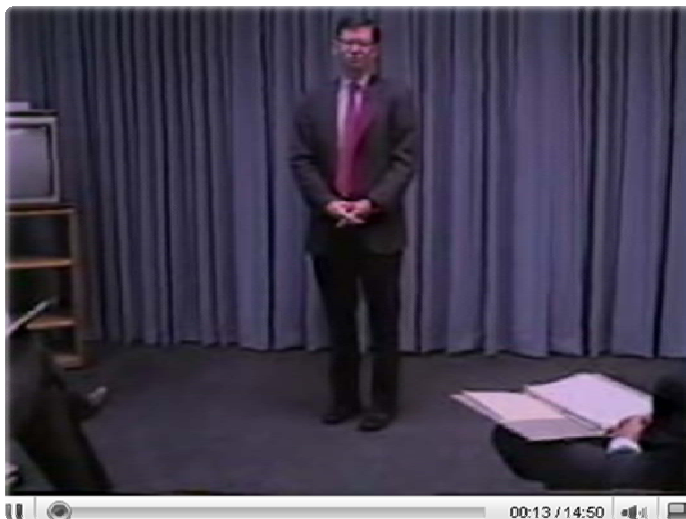


Interestingly, Schmidt beat out 50 other contenders (It would be thrilling to know their selection and evaluation methods!) to become chairman and eventually CEO of Google. Importantly, he pioneered the company's **70-20-10 model**: *Google employees are expected to spend 70 percent of their time on the core search and advertising businesses, 20 percent on related activities, and 10 percent on new projects* ([Source](#)).

Also, Schmidt is one of the few people who have become a *billionaire* (estimated wealth of US\$ 6.2 Billion) based on stock options received as an employee in a corporation of which neither he nor a relative was the founder ([Source](#)). Yeah, [Steve Ballmer](#) is another one of those few!

## PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS

While searching for something else yesterday evening (Great discoveries often happen by accident!), I discovered this interesting YouTube video entitled: [Eric Schmidt Public Speaking Class](#). Based on watching the video and reading the comments, I assume Schmidt is about 33 years old (1988) here, and is the general manager at Sun Microsystems. He basically wants to improve his public speaking skills, and be able to communicate better to larger audiences (Yes, as he goes up in rank, he is facing larger audiences. So better prepare!). Based on some of the given clues (video, search tags, comments and buzzer!) this seems to be a [Toastmasters](#) session. Yes, ***Eric Schmidt was/is a Toastmaster*** (I assume). Also, you will have fun watching him being grilled (by his own staff?) and evaluated by the small audience (I assume based on the noise. The camera is mostly focused on him, obviously!). Here we go:



URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA1I6MUOKkU>

## JUICE

Actually, the main reason for sharing with you this video is not really to show you an example of excellent public speaking. If that was the case, I would rather show you a [Martin Luther King](#) ("I have a dream..."), or [Ed Tate](#) (2000 World Champion of Public Speaking) speech. Actually, if you want to improve your public speaking skills, these two public speaking champions (in their own way!) would certainly give you some ideas and inspiration.





Hmm, let's get back on track! The real juice of this video to me, is not how he speaks, but **what he says about management, leadership, innovation and organizational growth**. Let's recap some of the juice.

Here is a summarized version of what Eric Schmidt said with a bit of creative flavor.

***"Where there is no conflict, there is no life."***

-Niccolo Machiavelli

"The most important quality of a manager is **his ability to lead people**. Leadership comes from within, and is not something one can easily teach. It is about getting your staff excited, motivated and inspired to action. I have discovered that it is much more important to be a good leader, than actually understand what you are doing. If you are a good leader you can hire people that can teach you things.

From my experience **the most successful companies are the ones where there is enormous conflict**. Conflict does not mean killing one another, but instead means there is a process by which there is a disagreement. It is okay to have different points of views and disagree, because tolerance for multiple opinions and people often leads to the right decision through some kind of process.

It is really the only way to deal with the high rate of change (and continuous and disruptive innovation!) we find in the technology industry. **Nothing in school prepares you for this...** that was the thing that really annoyed me the most... In fact if you look in the computer industry, every one of the successful companies is **run by a real tough guy**, somewhere high up in the management chain, **who has established a tone of conflict**. A professional constructive conflict tone!

The benefits that you get from conflict from the standpoint of the company, **is the ability to compete, innovate, grow and make lot of money.**"

"...With decades of corporate experience, Schmidt brings a grown-up approach to the Page-and-Brin show. When the two know-it-all's are locked in heated argument, it's up to **Schmidt to lead them to agreement** so that the company can present a united front to employees and Wall Street. (Source) "





So you see, his early understanding, experience and ability to facilitate '**Creative Disagreements**' (A term he used during the video) has certainly helped him to succeed at Google and spark more innovation and success. Schmidt plays today a critical role in "building the corporate infrastructure needed to maintain Google's rapid growth as a company and on ensuring that quality remains high while product development cycle times are kept to a minimum. ([Source](#))"

Overall, I am pretty sure I missed out on some of the juice from the video (and perhaps added a bit!), so you better watch the video to catch the rest (and correct me where I went wrong!). Also, I am reasonably sure that Eric Schmidt's ideas about management, leadership, innovation and organizational growth has evolved since this video (19 years ago!), so you might want to '*Google*' *some of his latest videos or articles to keep yourself updated.*

Finally, I hope by watching this video you realize that ***having weaknesses or knowing about your weaknesses is actually a strength, if you deal with them.*** Eric Schmidt knew that he was not a good public speaker or communicator, but he also knew that if he worked on these weaknesses he would improve... (and the rest is history, still in the making!). So, there is still hope (and stay away from dope!) for people like us to succeed (in whatever we aspire to be!). We just got to keep on trying, and never give up. Hmm, I beginning to sound like a motivation speaker, so I better stop here.

Anyway, have fun learning something from this video. This video could also be an excellent trigger for class/online discussions :)

**"Everything that can be invented has  
been invented."**

*-Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents,  
1899*

## 25. HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE STAFF? (STEVE BALLMER)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/10/how-do-you-motivate-staff-steve-ballmer.html>



### WHO?

Steven Anthony Ballmer (born March 24, 1956 in Detroit, Michigan) is an American businessman and has been the chief executive officer of Microsoft Corporation since January 2000. Ballmer is the first person to become a billionaire (in U.S. dollars) based on stock options received as an employee of a corporation in which he was neither a founder nor a relative of a founder. In its 2007 World's Richest People ranking, Forbes Magazine ranked Ballmer as the 31st richest person in the world, with an estimated wealth of \$15 billion [...more](#)

### JUICE

I have four words for you: **I LOVE THIS COMPANY!** YEEEEEEAAAAS! Just watch, listen, laugh and reflect:

- ❑ [YouTube - Steve Ballmer Goes Crazy](#) (1 minute)
- ❑ [YouTube - Steve Ballmer: 'Developers, Developers...'](#) (19 seconds)
- ❑ [YouTube - Steve Ballmer: Developers Music Video](#) (3 minutes)

### REFLECTION

*How do Microsoft staff keep themselves motivated* (with the exception of their nice salary and perks!)? Although, 99% of us use Microsoft solutions, we will almost always have something bad to say about them. We simply love to hate them (and sometimes for valid reasons! Hmm, I suppose die-hard haters would probably say 'Always!').

Now, *how would you keep yourself motivated working for probably the most hated company in the world?* If you look and listen to Bill Gates, I am not sure that will be the most motivating



experience (Except for admiring his amazing wealth and achievements!). Yes, he might be the super brain behind Microsoft's success, but I suppose he is not the one keeping their staff working day and night trying to outsmart the super geeks from Google, Yahoo, Apple, Sony, and so on.

If you ask me, and watch Steve Ballmer in action, there is no doubt that *his brand of explicit enthusiasm and passion for the company is contagious to the staff*. I am not sure why they are motivated (Fear, Money, Passion or Joy!), but I suppose his 110% commitment and passion plays a key role (Sometimes you need a bit of emotional outbreaks to bring out the best in your staff!). Although, I have read about many Microsoft staff migrating to Google, it seems to have little effect on their bottom line (profit!) until now.

Finally, the main reason for sharing with you these videos is that ***such videos are excellent to get your students engaged and motivated for dynamic discussion sessions*** about issues such as leadership, management, entrepreneurship, personality, enthusiasm, passion, etc. If you got problems downloading YouTube videos, you can for example use this [Online Flash Video Converter](#) (by vixy.net) or [download them directly from here](#).

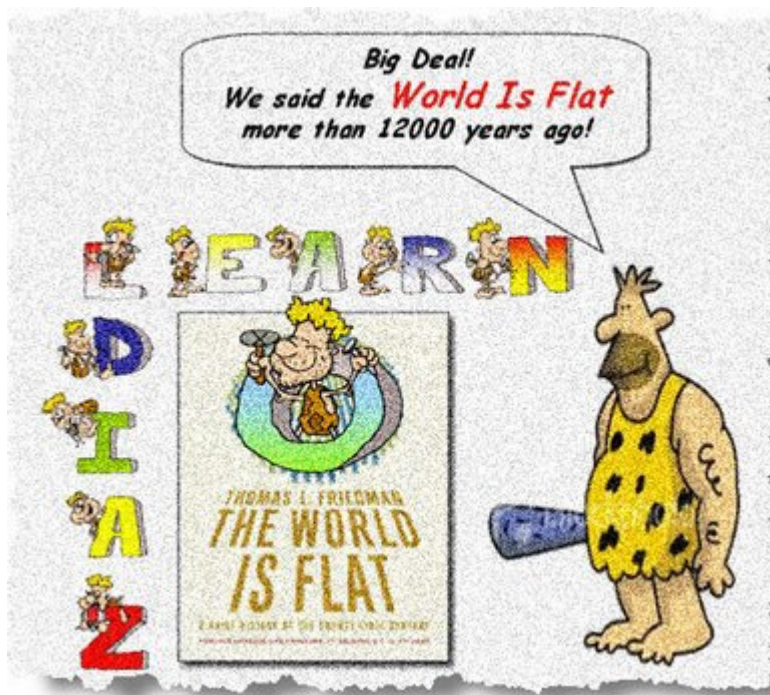
Hmm, I am not sure a Steve Ballmer passionate monkey dance outburst would work very well in Malaysia or Singapore, but *you will never know until you have tried :)*

**"640K ought to be enough for  
anybody."**

*- Bill Gates, 1981*

## 26. THE WORLD IS FLAT 3.0 (THOMAS FRIEDMAN)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/world-is-flat-30-thomas-friedman.html>



### THE WORLD IS FLAT 3.0?

"The World Is Flat 3.0 is Thomas L. Friedman's account of the great changes taking place in our time, as lightning-swift advances in technology and communications put people all over the globe in touch as never before-creating an explosion of wealth in India and China, and challenging the rest of us to run even faster just to stay in place.

The World Is Flat 3.0 is an essential update on globalization, its opportunities for individual empowerment, its achievements at lifting millions out of poverty, and its drawbacks--environmental, social, and political, powerfully illuminated by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Lexus and the Olive Tree ([Source](#))."

***I have a Dream (King)! Go Green (Friedman)! Yes, We Can (Obama)!***

### FRIEDMAN TALK?

Thomas Friedman gave a great talk at MIT Milestone Celebration on November 28, 2007, which is available (below) for FREE to explore, learn from, and reflect.



Video URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcE2ufqtzyk>

In this great talk, he shares with us how he by accident discovered that the 'World is Flat', the four flatteners, the evolution of Globalization (1.0 - Countries, 2.0 - Companies, 3.0 - Individuals), the importance of nurturing and promoting individual imagination and mash-ups to gain a competitive edge, the importance of mastering more than one discipline, his upcoming book, "***Green is the new Red, White, and Blue***" ([YouTube - Tom Friedman on Clean Energy](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcE2ufqtzyk)), and much more.

Yeah, we know that the 19th Century belongs to ***Great Britain***, and the 20th Century belongs to the ***United States***, but which country will the 21st Century belong to? China, India or United States? Nope! It will probably go to Google, a dynamic region somewhere, or perhaps an individual that has not been born yet.

"Washington is brain-dead" (Dumb as they want to be!), but the United States is alive and kicking much thanks to their ***creative and innovative culture***, and this is an area we need to learn more about, reflect, adapt and customize to our needs and way of life to compete in a global economy that is increasingly driven by creativity, innovation and ideas.



Finally, the great challenge for the 21 century will be dealing with global warming, pollution and the increasing global toxic consumption of nature. The only way out of this is to **Go Green** (which makes business sense, too!); innovate disruptive, cheap, and scalable energy-efficient consumption technologies, and discover new forms of energy (In addition, we need to consume with Green sense and caution!). The new disruptive secret Green energy innovation might not be water, hydrogen, air, solar energy, or Superman (Sorry, Dwight Howard!).

Imagine driving a car, or flying a plane using only human energy (Flintstones!). I like to call it **'Human Touch'**! Now that is disruptive and Green, but is it possible? :)

"I think there is a world market for  
maybe five computers."

- Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943





## 27. HARUN YAHYA - AN INVITATION TO THE TRUTH

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/09/harun-yahya-invitation-to-truth.html>



*"This web site has been developed with the aim of promoting and publicizing the works of **Harun Yahya** (is a pen name used by Mr. Adnan Oktar), a prominent Turkish thinker and author. His books have attracted great attention both in Turkey and worldwide. In the 90's especially, the works of Harun Yahya have been a means of intellectual awakening for many Muslims, and non-Muslims alike, in the face of the illusions of the modern age...**this web site gives free access to all the books** written by Harun Yahya and other materials inspired by his works... This web site calls everyone from every corner of the world, from whatever cultural, racial, ethnic or social background to realize this basic fact and think of his duties to his Creator. In this message lies the real redemption and happiness of mankind. "*

URL: <http://www.harunyahya.com/>

### JUICE

- ☐ [Books & Audio Books](#)
- ☐ [Movies](#)
- ☐ [Articles](#)
- ☐ [Multimedia Presentations](#)
- ☐ [Other Useful Sites](#)

(Everything from '[The Miracle in the Leafcutter Ant](#)' to '[Islam Denounces Terrorism](#)')

### FIRST

I would like to wish all Muslims a **Ramadan Mubarak!** Insha-Allah, we all have a great month of Ibadah (All acts of worship to obey Allah. E.g. fasting, prayer and doing good deeds) and Learning (also Ibadah). And I also wish my fellow non-Muslim friends and visitors a prosperous month of happiness, productivity, fun and learning.





## WHY?

As you might know by now, today is the first day of [fasting](#) (during Ramadan) for us Muslims. This fact got me thinking about how I can also facilitate a better understanding of Islam and Muslims to the Non-Muslims, using this blog as a channel. After a bit of reflection, I thought that linking you to the [Harun Yahya](#) site would be a good start to open your mind about what Islam is about and its views on Science, Technology, Terrorism, Nature, etc. As all the materials (as far as I know) are free, you will have a lot to explore (without access barriers except perhaps the need for broadband to download or view the videos). I believe it is a great open educational resource site for both Muslims and Non-Muslims alike.

## TYPICAL QUESTIONS

Here are a few typical questions I have gotten throughout my life from curious learning individuals:

- ☐ ***Are you a Muslim?*** (This one I get from both Muslims and Non-Muslims)
- ☐ ***You are joking right? Seriously?*** (This one I get because of my looks. Suspiciously white-looking!)
- ☐ ***Alright, but you are different?*** (If we all mix more, I suppose we will realize that we have more in common than we realize! )
- ☐ ***Do you drink?*** (If so, you are one of us!)
- ☐ ***Do you party?*** (Beginning to really like you!)
- ☐ ***Do you eat pig?*** (What's wrong with the pig!)
- ☐ ***Do you pray?*** (Getting serious! Especially, if you got a long beard!)
- ☐ ***Have you studied at a Religious school (or Madrasah)?*** (Red Alert!)
- ☐ ***Have you been (or studied in) to Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan or Iraq?*** (Confirmed!)
- ☐ Etc.

If I answer all these questions correctly, I will probably be on someone's most wanted list. I am only joking, but I suppose others might feel uncomfortable with all these questions, especially if they are new to it. But since I have always been the odd one out, I have gotten used to it (Actually, these experiences are great for story-telling and a good laugh!). Yes, I am also left-handed! A Genius! Well, when I joined a chocolate factory (Freia) sometime in the past, I was informed that left-handed workers were more prone to accidents (A right-handed world!). It made

me feel very comfortable when I was assigned to manage a monstrous chocolate packing machine. Though, my colleague coached me well, and Al-Hamdulilla I had no major accidents!



### I AM THE CHOSEN ONE!

I thought I had experienced it all! But, then again I had never visited 'Down Under'. When I travelled to Australia recently (holiday) with my wife and two kids (below 6), I had a tough time (a good laugh I mean!) getting through custom (or security) at Brisbane Airport with our stroller, baby bottles, baby oil, milk powder, nappies, etc. (You never know!). Then came the moment of truth! The Aussie mate told me that I have been **randomly selected to check for explosives** (My younger brother was also chosen once, too!).

I suddenly felt that I was more than famous (Infamous!). I have never really been lucky in terms of selection, but this time I was the chosen one (Neo watch out!).

Hopefully, next time it is **Harvard University** offering me a free PhD scholarship for researching the future masterpiece 'The Lecture'. Yes, then they took me to a tent like construction with curtains (a few meters away). Luckily there was both a man and a woman going to check me out, meaning I used my intellect to figure out that I did not need to strip down naked. The body shirt was quick with the electronic stick (No 'Crocodile Dundee' style private part check! Or 'That is not a knife...'), and I thought well I am through. But then the Aussie pointed to my hand luggage, and I invited them to check it out. Then I was instructed to open it myself. I was thinking should I open it slowly showing a bit nerves to get them more excited (not really!), but then again I got my wife and kids waiting outside. Luckily, I had no explosives (this time around. CIA alert! Just joking! Are you sure?!). What can I say, except I admire the Australians for their professionalism and friendliness (Seriously!). Let's face it, they were doing their job, which was strategized by someone higher. Overall, Brisbane and Gold Coast was simply great, especially for the kids. So, what more can we ask for?



## REFLECTION!

Life goes on, but I feel sorry for others that are randomly selected for the first time (Perhaps 'Google' search could be used as one of the filtering tools). One might argue "We can never know, right?". How can we argue against that argument (which can also be applied to any human, race, culture and religion)! Then, the statistics argument will come up (Yeah, divide that with one billion or more, and tell me what you get?) Anyway, I suppose now that there are more than one Billion Muslims around the world here and there, we must ***find ways together to co-exist***. We Muslims also need to remember that we need to do more efforts to co-exist; even after a few bad incidents (No weed incident is going to stop me from trying!)

## THE INCONVENIENT TRUTH

Coming to think of it, we are also facing another major battle in the coming decades commonly known today as the [Inconvenient Truth](#) (Ask my environmentalist Brother 'Gore', and he will tell you!), which will probably in a strange way bring us increasingly closer (due to necessity at least!), as we struggle to save our planet, and give our future generations a chance to enjoy and appreciate fresh air, clean water, delicious food, waterfalls, fjords, animals, bugs, fish, whales, trees, nature, and so on.

According to Islam, our main purpose is to worship Allah and to realize our responsibility towards Him as Khalifat-Allah (the vicegerent of Allah) on earth.

*"Behold, Thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.' They said: 'Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?' - Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy name?' He said: 'I know what you know not.'"(2:30).*

Yes, we have the ability to do a lot of mischief (especially with all our nuclear toys), but then again we have been given the ability to do good and change for the better. So, it is really up to us to make a difference! Can we do it? Of course we can! We just got to keep on trying and never give up (Then Insha-Allah or God willing the fruits will come)! Finally, the real joy in this worldly life is not only our success, but the struggle itself. Interestingly, the more we struggle, the more we learn to appreciate those little things... :)



## 28. GOOGLE LABS - GOOGLE SURVEY (TOOL?)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/10/google-labs-online-survey-tool.html>



Dear [Larry Page](#), [Sergey Brin](#) and [Eric Schmidt](#),

First, I would like to congratulate you all for playing a revolutionary role in literally **transforming the way mankind search, find, access and create knowledge in the 21st Century**. Yes, without Google Blogger I would probably not be writing this online letter (Instead I would have probably used [Wordpress](#)!).

However, I am not writing this letter to praise Google, because that is already done by millions of supporters around the world. Actually, I am writing because I have been eagerly predicting (but still waiting!) for a specific Google tool (for more than 2 years! Yeah, if I had been proactive and had an entrepreneurial mindset I would be laughing financially today!) that I believe is critical for transforming the way we do research (or learn about others!), or more specifically create and conduct surveys, capture respondent data, and analyze the results/reports on-the-fly (**read/write/research = Web 3.0?**).

There are still millions of students and educators in the Schools, Colleges and Universities around the world who are doing research, conducting surveys and spending a lot of time collecting data, providing them often with little time to analyze and reflect the findings (critical/creative thinking aspect!). However, by providing them with a **free easy-to-use online survey tool** (alternative or complimentary option to their research) with basic features to create and conduct online surveys, collect the data, and display the results/reports in text and visual format (with exporting options to Excel, SPSS, etc.), could do miracles from an educational point-of-view.



From a business (or advertising) point-of-view it could also mean big bucks, because every survey respondent (and survey creator) would view their share of **AdSense** (text-based Google AdWords ads that are relevant to site content pages). For example, if one million people are conducting online surveys, and getting an average of 100 survey respondents (we are talking about 100 million respondents!). It wouldn't surprise me if we are talking about more than a billion respondents within a few months after launching such a tool.

Alright, I got to admit that there are plenty of excellent commercial and some reasonably good open source/free survey tools available today (e.g. we are using [VTSurvey](#) - an open source solution). Interestingly, there are some excellent partially free online survey tools such as [SurveyMonkey](#) and [SurveyGizmo](#). However, to enjoy the really juicy features, one would need to fork out the dollars. The pricing today on some of the commercial tools (e.g. SurveyMonkey) is reasonable, but then again why not *make it free to all and generate more revenue through creative advertising approaches*. I suppose if Google does not provide a free online survey tool in the near future, Yahoo or MSN would do it. If none of them, I am pretty sure a dynamic entrepreneur out there would facilitate the **next frontier of the web, providing everyone with tools to do online research** (A good example would be [poll daddy](#), but they are currently only providing polling, which most existing widely used learning tools/portals/LMS already provide including Blogger).

Overall, I am a big fan of Google Labs and they have graduated some amazing tools including [Google Reader](#), [Google Notebook](#), [Google Docs & Spreadsheets](#), [Google Video](#), [Google Scholar](#) and [Google Groups 2](#). Also, Google Labs have many more amazing tools in the pipeline (e.g. [Google Page Creator](#)), but I don't see any online survey tool coming through yet (Hopefully wrong!). However, should Google want to do it fast, they can for example simply invest or buy SurveyMonkey and make all their wonderful features available for free. A good example to reflect would be [JotSpot](#), which evolved into Google Docs (if I am not mistaken).

Thank you for reading and hopefully **both students and educators in the near future can enjoy conducting their own surveys online easily and freely**. Now, that would be a wonderful disruptive and innovative way to facilitate more research around the world :)

## 29. BLOGGER'S CHOICE AWARDS (THE CULT OF THE AMATEUR?)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/08/bloggers-choice-awards-cult-of-amateur.html>



*"...Here you'll see which blogs are **currently making an impact in the blogosphere**. The blogs you see here are all nominated and voted on by users like yourself!"*

I discovered by accident(al learning) the 'Blogger's Choice Awards' (site) yesterday, when I was checking out the latest juicy stuff on the [Infinite Thinking Machine](#) (ITM) blog. I noticed that ITM had been nominated for '**Best Educational Blog**'. WOW! That is a great achievement! But, then I realized to my great joy, I could also register and nominate myself and get that cool **Brag(ging) Badge** on my site and look a bit impressive, too (Check-it-out on the right side of this blog. But please do not vote for me! I suppose I don't need to remind you :) ). To add more joy to my life, I can even vote for myself, which I of course did (Our ego is great!). This enabled my blog to jump ahead of all those nominated that forgot to vote for themselves. I still got a long way to reach the top, but at least I got one vote. It is amazing how much fun we can have promoting ourselves :)

### THE JUICY PART

I suppose the real joy of this site (for me), is that we can discover some of the great blogs in the different categories, and get connected to new people (or Gurus), ideas and resources. I especially find the [Best Educational Blog](#) category very interesting. Actually, this 'Blogger's Choice Awards' site is like an **interactive community rated learning repository**. You can actually find some really juicy stuff there (after filtering out some of the junk or poor stuff)!



## THE CULT OF THE AMATEUR

But then, I came across this book called the "[The Cult of the Amateur](#)" by Silicon Valley entrepreneur Andrew Keen, and suddenly I woke up to another dimension of Web 2.0, which I had thought about, but not to that level. Here are some interesting quotes from his reflections to NYT ([Source](#)):

- ❑ *"What the Web 2.0 revolution is really delivering is **superficial observations** of the world around us rather than deep analysis, shrill opinion rather than considered judgment."*
- ❑ *"...when **ignorance** meets egoism meets **bad taste** meets mob rule."*
- ❑ *"**history has proven that the crowd is not often very wise**"*
- ❑ *"...the **idea of objectivity is becoming increasingly passé** in the relativistic realm of the Web, where bloggers cherry-pick information and promote speculation and spin as fact. Whereas historians and journalists traditionally strived to deliver the best available truth possible, many bloggers revel in their own subjectivity..."*
- ❑ *"...democratized Web's penchant for mash-ups, remixes and cut-and-paste jobs **threaten not just copyright laws but also the very ideas of authorship and intellectual property.**"*
- ❑ *"...What you may not realize is that **what is free is actually costing us a fortune...***
- ❑ *The new winners — Google, YouTube, MySpace, Craigslist, and the hundreds of start-ups hungry for a piece of the Web 2.0 pie — are **unlikely to fill the shoes of the industries they are helping to undermine**, in terms of products produced, jobs created, revenue generated or benefits conferred. By stealing away our eyeballs, the **blogs and wikis are decimating the publishing**, music and news-gathering industries that created the original content those Web sites 'aggregate.' **Our culture is essentially cannibalizing its young, destroying the very sources of the content they crave.**"*

Although, I am not sure if I agree with all the extracted quotes above, I do believe that Andrew Keen is making some very important points that we certainly need to reflect more in the new world of Web 2.0 (or soon 3.0. Is it already here? What does Web 2.0 really mean anyway, besides the democratization of publishing and access to online read/write tools?).

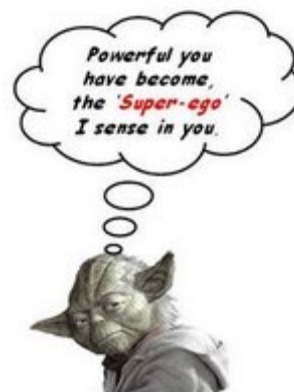


## BLOGGER'S CHOICE AWARDS + THE CULT OF THE AMATEUR = IGNORANCE + BAD TASTE

Now, what has 'The Cult of the Amateur' to do with the 'Blogger's Choice Awards'? Andrew Keen says, "...*history has proven that the crowd is not often very wise.*", and looking at the current voting results for the 'Best Educational Blog' I have to subjectively agree here (hopefully the crowd will get a bit wiser before the closing date.) How come [Stephen Downes' sensational blog](#) (23 votes) and [Infinite Thinking Machine \(ITM\)](#) blog (21 votes) have currently so few votes compared to the [leaders](#)? Also, there should be a bit more details to the evaluation criteria than simply "Best Educational Blog", like best educational blog for Schools, Colleges, University, Corporate Learning, Informal Learning, Life-Long Learning, etc. In addition, there should also be a few sub-categories (for 'Best Educational Blog') such as for best design, originality, creativity, relevance, content, fun, etc. Let's see what they will come up with next year.

### WHAT REALLY MATTERS!

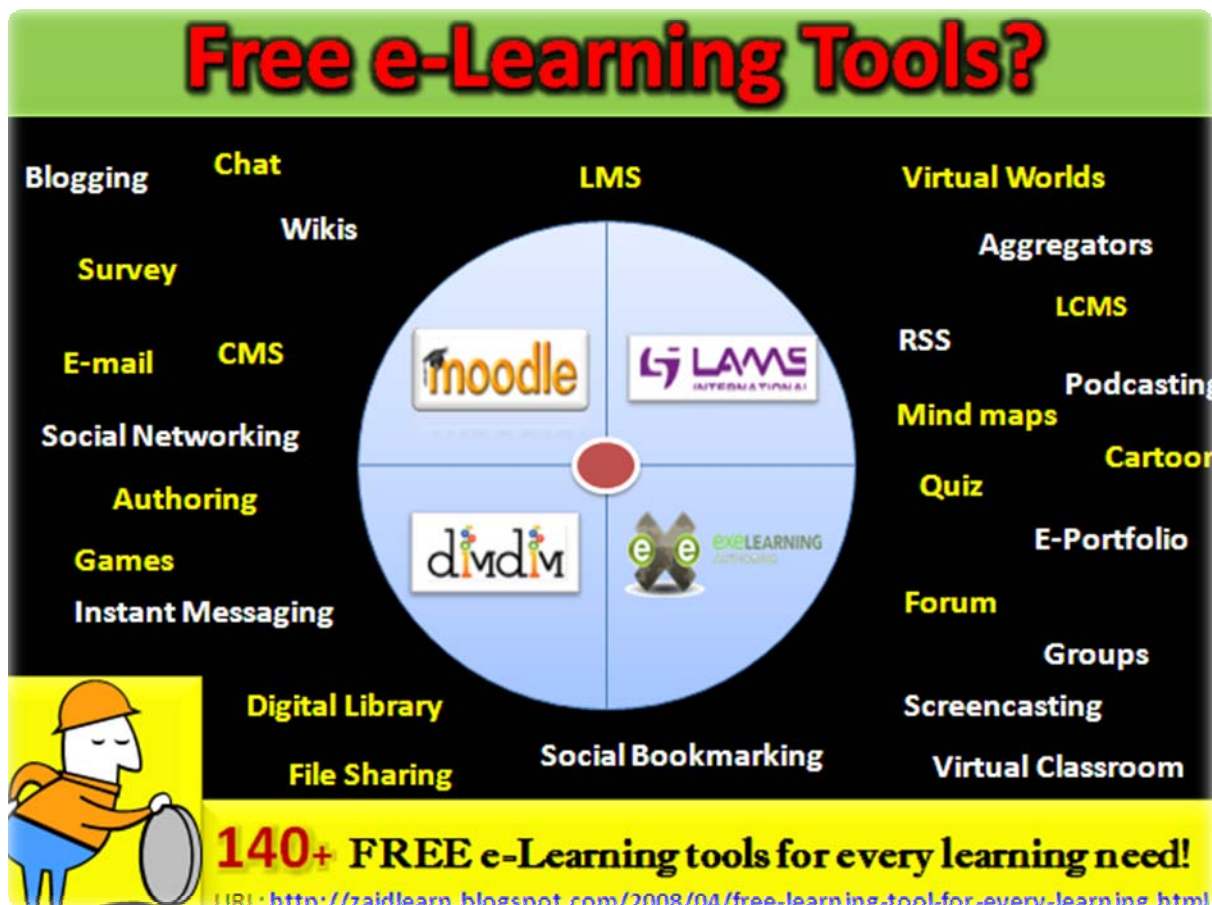
Yeah, of course it is nice to be voted the best educational blog (popularity), but to me *it cannot be compared to getting respect, recognition and appreciation from your peers or gurus*, who can really differentiate the 'Wannabe' from the 'Real Deal'. For example, when a 'Learning Guru' like [Joseph Hart recommends you](#) or [Stephen Downes quotes you](#) (or comments your blog) you know you are doing something right. Yes, it feels good :)



Finally, I might have lost the battle for the best educational blog this year, but with the assistance of my super-ego and coaching from 'Yoda' I will have another go at it next year. Mark my words :)

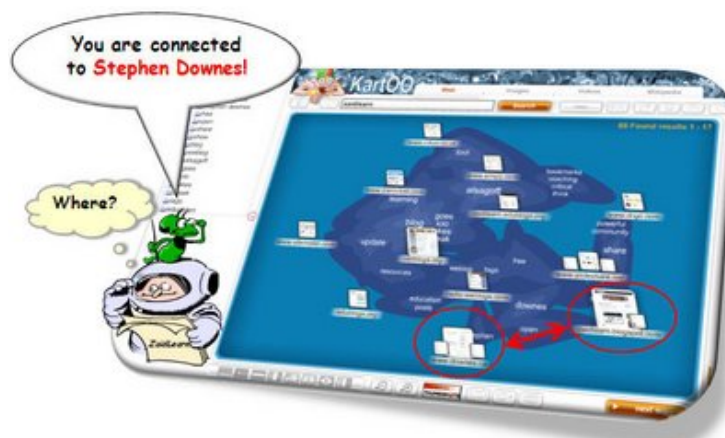
The Ego strikes back! Please vote for me now! I need your support to be recognized as an amateur (I mean professional) :)

## GALAXY 4: FREE E-LEARNING TOOLS



### 30. A FREE LEARNING TOOL FOR EVERY LEARNING PROBLEM?

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/04/free-learning-tool-for-every-learning.html>



Let's explore the idea that there is at least one excellent free learning tool (or site) for every learning problem, need or issue!

#### ***I want a FREE:***

1. Easy-to-use and secure Internet browser? [Firefox](#)
2. e-Mail system? [Gmail](#)
3. Social bookmarking tool? [del.icio.us](#)
4. Social bookmarking tool with collaborative learning features (groups, forums, etc.)? [Diigo](#)
5. Tool to **translate** text or a webpage? [Google Language Tools](#)
6. RSS reader? [Omea Reader](#)
7. Online RSS reader? [Google Reader](#)
8. Online Calendar? [Google Calendar](#)
9. Tool to aggregate all my resources, mail, RSS feeds, etc, in one place? [iGoogle](#) or [Pageflakes](#)
10. Platform to incorporate all my favorite tools within one environment? [Elgg](#)
11. Learning Management System (**LMS**)? Easy, [Moodle](#)
12. Hosted LMS? Here are [SEVEN](#)!
13. Tool to assist me in evaluating and selecting a LMS? [EduTools](#)
14. Learning Activity Management System? [LAMS](#)
15. Collaboration tool? Connect with [Ning](#)
16. Social Networking tool? Tricky one! [Facebook](#)
17. 3D online virtual world where I can socialize, connect and learn? [Second Life](#)
18. Content Management System (**CMS**)? [Joomla](#)



19. Tool to create my own website? [Webnode](#)
20. **Virtual Classroom**? [DimDim](#)
21. Hosted Virtual Classroom? [WiZiQ](#)
22. Tool to broadcast myself to the world? [USTREAM](#)
23. Tool to make calls from my computer? [Skype](#)
24. Videoconferencing chat service? [Vawkr](#)
25. Content **authoring** tool? How about two? [eXe](#) & [CourseLab](#)
26. Alternative to Microsoft Office? [OpenOffice](#)
27. Online suite of office tools? [Google Docs](#) or [Zoho](#)
28. Tool that accurately converts my PowerPoint to Flash (including animations)? [iSpring Free](#)
29. Web authoring tool alternative to FrontPage and Dreamweaver? [NvU](#) or [KompoZer](#)
30. Personal online notebook? [Google Notebook](#)
31. Blogging tool? [WordPress](#)! Why aren't you using WordPress? Good Question!
32. Blogging tool for educators? [Edublogs](#)
33. Directory of edubloggers from around the world? [International Edubloggers Directory](#)
34. Microblogging tool? [Twitter](#)
35. Wiki tool? [PBwiki](#)
36. Encyclopedia, which I can add to or edit? [Wikipedia](#)
37. Community dedicated to collaborative development of free content? [WikiEducator](#)
38. Audio recording tool? [Audacity](#)
39. Tool to record and host my audio recordings online? [Odeo Studio](#)
40. Tool to transform media into collaborative spaces with video, voice and text commenting? [VoiceThread](#)
41. Tool for storytelling? [Here are 50!](#)
42. Screencasting (recording) tool? [Wink](#)
43. Hosted screencasting tool? [Jing](#)
44. Mindmapping tool? [FreeMind](#)
45. Tool that lets me brainstorm and create mindmaps online? [Bubbl.us](#)
46. Easy-to-learn 3D authoring software tool? [Google SketchUp](#)
47. Alternative to 3D Studio Max? [Blender](#)
48. **Photo/image** editing tool? [GIMP](#) or [Picasa](#)
49. Online photo/image editing tool? [Splashup](#)
50. Tool to create cool personalized images? [Custom Sign Generator Widgets](#)
51. Image Resizer? [Doseize](#)
52. Watermarking tool? [uMark](#)
53. Screen Color Picker? [ColorSchemer](#)
54. Tool to highlight text in a webpage? [The Awesome Highlighter](#)
55. Tool to create flowcharts, diagrams, technical drawings? [Gliffy](#)
56. Tool to create comics and cartoons? [ToonDoo](#)



57. Tool to make screenshots from different browsers with one click? [Browsershots](#)
58. Tool to create PDFs from any Windows program? [PDFCreator](#)
59. Online file conversion tool (e.g. Word >PDF>PowerPoint)? [Zamzar](#)
60. Tool to **share** my slides? Too easy man! [SlideShare](#)
61. Tool to share my videos? Come on! [YouTube](#)
62. Online science research sharing portal? [SciVee](#)
63. Online community to share and discuss instructional teacher videos? [TeacherTube](#)
64. Online community to share, discuss and learn about the uses of educational technology? [EdTechTalk](#)
65. Online community to test my big ideas? [Big Think](#)
66. Tool to download videos from any video sharing site (YouTube, Metacafe, etc.)? [ClipNabber](#)
67. Self-publishing tool (books, papers, articles, etc)? [Scribd](#)
68. Tool to share my pictures? Are you joking! [Flickr](#)
69. Space to upload and share my files? [eSnips](#)
70. File hosting solution that allows me to share files up to 250MB each? [FileCrunch](#)
71. Online **quiz** tool? [ClassMarker](#)
72. Tool to create interactive quizzes and puzzles? [Hot Potatoes](#)
73. Tool to create web and print-based crossword puzzles? [EclipseCrossword](#)
74. Inquiry-oriented lesson tool? [WebQuest](#)
75. Online polling tool with a bit of fizzle? [PollDaddy](#)
76. Online survey tool? [Click here to choose!](#)
77. Tool to create Flash **games** (templates)? [ClassTools.net](#)
78. Investment Simulation Game? [Virtual Trader](#)
79. Interactive 3D business simulator? [INNOV8](#)
80. Game to understand cancer better? [Re-Mission](#)
81. Game to understand the scientific method and 21st Century Skills? [River City](#)
82. Game to understand variable manipulations for urban management? [SimCity](#)
83. Game to understand social studies better? [Quest Atlantis](#)
84. Game to understand world hunger and efforts to alleviate it? [WFP Foodforce](#)
85. Game to learn more vocabulary and help hungry people? Seriously! [FreeRice](#)
86. Range of interactive tools to help me understand maths concepts? [Shodor Interactivate](#)
87. Tool to create my own **search** engine tailored to my needs? [Google Custom Search Engine](#)
88. Human-powered search engine? [Mahalo](#)
89. Metasearch engine with visual display interfaces? What! Here is [KartOO!](#)
90. Search engine that groups the results by topic via automated clustering technology? [Vivisimo](#)
91. Science-specific search engine? [Scirus](#)
92. All-in-one research search tool? [Schoolr](#)
93. Tool to help me collect, manage, and cite my research sources? [Zotero](#)
94. Tool that generates detailed statistics about the visitors to my website? [Google Analytics](#)



95. Tool to search, discover, rank and compare different sites around the world? [Alexa](#)
96. Tool to search the full text of books? [Google Book Search](#)
97. Tool to search for scholarly literature? [Google Scholar](#)
98. Tool to search for patents? [Google Patent Search](#)
99. Tool that sends me email updates of the latest relevant Google results (e.g. e-Learning)? [Google Alerts](#)
100. Energy saving search engine? [Blackle](#)
101. Online visual dictionary and thesaurus? [Visuwords](#)
102. World digital *library*? [World Digital Library](#)
103. Tool to build and distribute my own digital library? [Greenstone](#)
104. Site to find and search across all **OpenCourseWare** (OCW) courses? [OpenCourseWare Consortium](#)
105. Repository and learning network of Open Educational Resources (OER)? [OER Commons](#)
106. Site to get the latest updates on OER and OCW? [OER Blogs](#)
107. Portal to non-formal OER and training resources? [Open Training Platform](#)
108. Encyclopedia of video tutorials to help me learn any software? [Edumax](#) or [Wikivid](#)
109. e-Book to learn more about e-learning 2.0? [Learning 2.0 eBook](#)
110. Site to learn more about rapid e-learning? [The Rapid e-Learning Blog](#)
111. Site to learn more about Online Course Development? [Hitchhiker's Guide to Course Development](#)
112. Crash course in learning theory? [Click here!](#)
113. Database of Learning Theories? [Click here](#) & [here!](#)
114. Tool to help me understand and use learning styles effectively? [Learning Styles Online.com](#)
115. Repository of creative and critical thinking tools? [Mycoted to the rescue!](#)
116. Route to learn more about the 21st century skills? [Route 21](#)
117. Repository of how everything works? [HowStuffWorks](#)
118. Repository of lectures from the world's top scientists? [Videlectures.NET](#)
119. Directory of academic open access repositories? [OpenDOAR](#)
120. Site covering today's top social, political, and tech issues? [FORA.tv](#)
121. Site to improve my learning skills? [Study Guides & Strategies](#)
122. Gaming tool to help me learn ICT? [ReviselCT.co.uk](#)
123. Tool to improve my typing skills? [Peter's Online Typing Course](#)
124. Tool to improve my reading skills? [ZAP Reader](#)
125. Interactive courseware to improve my workplace skills? [ALISON](#)
126. Multimedia site that enhance our understanding of war and its history? [Maps-of-War](#)
127. 3D human anatomy visualization tool? [Visible Body](#)
128. Tool to learn languages? [Mango](#)
129. Tool to explore the World? [Google Earth](#)
130. Tool to explore the Universe? [WorldWide Telescope](#)
131. Tool to visualize human development? [Gapminder](#)



132. Tool to answer all my questions? [Answer.com](#)
133. Site with talks by the world's greatest thinkers and doers? [TED](#) is a good starting point!
134. Article to reveal the secrets of the super-learners? [Click here!](#)
135. Link to the most innovative web 2.0 (and 3.0) lab in the world? [Google Labs](#)
136. Tool to stumble upon and discover great websites, videos, photos, etc. ? [StumbleUpon](#)
137. Daily newsletter that keeps me updated with the latest news on online learning? [Stephen's OLDaily](#)
138. Site dedicated to tracking the changes occurring in education today? [Open Education](#)
139. Site to update me on the latest free instructional resources for Higher Education? [EduResources Weblog](#) & [Educational Technology](#)
140. Site to discover **delicious** free tools, resources, and sites? [ZaidLearn's Del.icio.us Discoveries](#)
141. Site to make you shut up? About time! Here we go:

### [25 \(must-have free\) Tools: Professional Development Programme \(Jane Knight\)](#)

In short, for every learning problem (or issue) we have today, there is probably a free tool or site out there that enables us to solve it. If not, I am pretty sure some genius out there is constructing it right now. If no one is doing it, perhaps we can do it.

Another challenge is to integrate all our learning tools efficiently and effectively into our learning spaces. On the positive note, more and more tools are creating integration modules to widely used systems like Moodle and Facebook, so it might not be so difficult after all. Also, with [OpenID](#) we can increasingly login to all our favorite websites without much hassle. Single-login to all our learning tools! Now that is something we all can appreciate! Remember one password! Tough one!



If you want to experience my learning adventure as I discover, perhaps you should subscribe to my [Del.icio.us Learning Adventure!](#) Otherwise, you could always wait a week or two for the updates in this blog. Have fun '**Socratic Tooling**' to solve your learning problems and issues :)



## 31. ANY FREE HOSTED CMS OR LMS? (YES, OBAMA SAYS!)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/any-free-hosted-cms-or-lms-yes-obama.html>

CAN WE HOST AND FACILITATE OUR COURSES ONLINE FOR FREE?



Are there any **FREE Course/Learning Management Systems (C/LMS)** out there that require no financial hardware, software and hosting investments? In other words, are there any free hosted C/LMS that we can explore and perhaps use?

### FREE HOSTED C/LMS?

Here are a few free hosted C/LMS that you might want to explore, before considering investing hardcore money on a commercial alternative:

1. [Nfomedia](#)

A web application designed especially to enable interaction outside of the classroom for higher education courses. Features include: wiki content editing, course blogs, online grades, announcements, text messaging, Nfo mail, message boards, student journals, and chat.



2. [Edu2.0](#)

A Free web-based education site with a comprehensive set of features for teachers, students and parents. Features include: content management/sharing, calendar, attendance tracking, quiz, forums, notifications, and grade book with graphical reports.

3. [MyiCourse](#)

Provides tools for users to build, manage and deliver courses. Users can even construct private and public universities. It allows a multi-media approach using video, audio, images and PDFs. Students can be timed, tested and they can send their transcripts after course completion. It also allows sharing of academic courses for all to use.

4. [LectureShare](#)

A service that connects students and instructors by allowing instructors to post course material and allowing students to get course updates via text messages, emails or RSS.

5. [eLearning Community 2.0](#)

A social site for knowledge seekers to enrich their knowledge through online learning, sharing and socializing to make new friends without boundaries (It even includes an online conferencing tool! Then again you could always integrate [WiZiQ](#) or [DimDim](#) if this is not already included in your system).

6. [Ecto](#)

A collaborative personal learning environment. Any member of Ecto (students, teachers, publishers) can create and share content. It claims to be the only learning management system built from the ground up on the principles and architecture of social software.

7. [Chalksite](#)

A web package designed for teachers, giving them class-level Web sites and tools. Features include: content management, messages, assignments, forums, and grade books.

If we explore further, I suppose we will discover several more free hosted C/LMS. By the end of 2008, it wouldn't surprise me if the number of free hosted C/LMS will increase to beyond 100.

**How do they make money?** Advertising, donations, venture capital, etc.! I suppose some are holding on (while losing money!) hoping that some big 'Giant' (e.g. MSN, Yahoo, Google and Facebook) will soon acquire them for a big buck.

For whatever reason they are doing it (noble and/or business), we users are going to increasingly be spoilt for choice, and issue of free will not be sufficient. In addition, these learning solutions would need to be easy-to-learn/use, and empower us with the necessary learning tools, features

and capacities (storage, scalability, export/import tools, 24/7 support, etc.) to enable us to facilitate effective and engaging learning environments tailored to students' learning needs.



### IMAGINE!

Alright, we have time-ported to **2012**. I suppose the University has its' own system (commercial, open source, or in-house built) to manage all the critical student, staff, and course data (records, billing, results, registration, etc.), but interestingly most systems have managed to go beyond, and now enable educators to choose which C/LMS (or social/collaborative learning system) that they would want to use to facilitate learning, if the local one does not meet their needs. Not only can they change template and customize features used, they can also use externally hosted C/LMS if they want (application assembly tool! Widgets!). This has been enabled, because all systems now communicate through a common language, enabling educators to easily import and export (or integrate) courses, content, and results with a few simple clicks.

The beauty of all this is that now Universities, Colleges, and Schools can invest more of their funds instead on hiring top-notch educators, and have larger budgets for training and faculty support. The e-Learning CMS/LMS/PLE (Personal Learning Environments) providers will get their share via advertising, donations, and venture capital. Tools are free! Content is free! Learning is free!

Interestingly, some entrepreneurial students would have figured out ways to make money sense out of all this! They will be making money by selling their lecture notes, exams information, written reports, study guides, examination tips, etc. using tools like [ShareNotes](#). Also, new advertising models will have blossomed basically paying both the students' study fees and lecturers' basic salaries, so that will also not be much of an issue. The Internet will be everywhere, computer devices will be charged by human touch. ***The only thing separating us from learning is our will or motivation to learn!***

The free (at least partially!) global formal learning network ecosystem is complete. What a wonderful world! Can we do it? Yes, we can! Is this a good idea? I suppose I will use my imagination to come up with a better one soon :)



## 32. EDU2.0 - FREE HOSTED LMS (OR VLE)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/09/edu20-lms.html>



### WHAT?

edu 2.0 (<http://www.edu20.org/>), meaning 'Next Generation Education'. This is a **free web-based education site** with a comprehensive set of features for teachers, students and parents. Now, anyone can teach and/or learn using the system, whether it's at school (College or University), at home, or on the move.

Will **edu 2.0** remain FREE? Yes. In addition, they will not add advertising.

### DIFFERENCE

There are several important differences (from tools such as Moodle and Blackboard). First of all, their system is web-hosted and free; you don't have to download any software or manage your own servers. Second, their [Resources](#) section allows you to **graphically browse thousands of community-contributed resources** by topic; you can even **upload your own resources** and they will host them for you. Third, their unique **personalized learning system** allows students to study at their own pace and track their progress against a chosen curriculum. Finally, their [Community](#) section allows teachers and students to **network and collaborate** with other members that share the same educational interests.

### MISSION

*Make teaching and learning more efficient and enjoyable*

### FEATURES

A selection of the juiciest ones ([Features List](#)):

- ☐ Comprehensive, easy to use learning management system.
- ☐ Teach traditional classes or public classes on the Internet.
- ☐ Integrated calendar shows class times and assignments.
- ☐ Close or open enrollment at any time.



- ☐ Attendance tracking.
- ☐ Several assignment types - online quiz, online freeform and offline.
- ☐ Quiz each topic in the curriculum and track your progress.
- ☐ Advance to the next level in each topic as you master it.
- ☐ Use secure forums and chat rooms to network and collaborate with members with similar educational interests.
- ☐ Subscribe for notification when new resources are added for a particular subject.
- ☐ Easy-to-use grade book with graphical reports.

## RESOURCES

edu 2.0's library has currently 10,000+ educational resources contributed by its existing community. Interestingly, it targets to add at least 50,000 more resources by 2007 year end.

If it targets more intensively Higher education and links up/communicates with all the existing open educational resources (or painfully adds manually to its resource repository), I am sure this target could perhaps even reach 500,000 by year end (a few OCW/OER repositories can be accessed from this blog. Explore again!). Yes, if it embeds the future [open education search](#) initiated by Hewlett Foundation with the assistance of Google, it would simply be dizzyingly juicy.

## ROADMAP

Juicy ones ([Full List](#)):

- ☐ Surveys for quick online polls
- ☐ Webconferencing
- ☐ Integration with mobile phones
- ☐ SCORM 2004 3rd edition support
- ☐ Ability to brand your home page according to your organization/preferences

## MASTERMIND

Founded in 2006 by [Graham Glass](#). Graham is a serial entrepreneur and winner of the 1996 Entrepreneur of the Year award.

## REFLECTION TIME

Even if you do not want to sign-up (and explore), you can still enjoy the [resource collection](#) (available to public). Currently, there are close to 1800 members in the community (surely to grow), so you won't feel lonely here. I suppose it does not have the growth pattern of FaceBook,

but then again it is not always about big numbers (Quality counts, too!). Interestingly, *you get points for every resource you share*, so that might also boost or trigger members to share more (Yeah, I have already got 5 points for linking the community to this blog!). Though, edu 2.0 seems a bit confusing to manage and learn (with all those juicy tools), especially for users that are not so IT-savvy (They might prefer a tool like [LectureShare](#), which would be easier to learn). Also, I felt that you are perhaps required to click more than necessary sometimes to get what you want (*Simple navigation rule: Less clicks, more joy!*).



I would have thought that Google, Yahoo or MSN would get the ball rolling first, with a *free hosted LMS*. Yes, I did predict in [my mumblings](#) (December 2005) that Google would perhaps buy Moodle (or host it for free) and enable anyone in the world to conduct online courses for free. But then again, sometimes you need an Entrepreneur like Graham Glass to facilitate or lead the Free Hosted LMS (VLE, LCMS, or whatever!) revolution (Please do not forget [LectureShare](#), too!).

In the final (surface) analysis, I believe that this is simply the ***beginning of a new era*** (much thanks to initiatives like edu 2.0), where in the future Google, Yahoo and MSN will join the bandwagon, battling out to show to the world that they care about providing everyone with online teaching and learning tools to educate the world (it would certainly boost their image and branding, too!). Of course, these three giants are already providing users with whole list of dynamic learning tools (such as this blogging tool!), but a comprehensive, integrated, and easy-to-use Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or LMS would not hurt either!

As for those Schools, Colleges or Universities (or Educators) that can't afford an LMS, hardware infrastructure, hosting services, and IT expertise, it will simply be liberating (Hmm, on the condition that their students (or staff) have easy access to a computer device and the Internet). Finally, let's for one moment *celebrate, promote* and *engage* in great initiatives like edu 2.0, which can make a major contribution to the world of free online education.

If we look into the future (say 5 years!), ***what do you think the online learning environment for 'Higher Education' would look like?*** Anyone got any ideas or thoughts to share? (e.g. Will Virtual worlds take over?) :)





### 33. LECTURESHARE - SHARE YOUR LECTURE NOTES TO THE WORLD

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/09/lectureshare-share-your-lecture-notes.html>



#### IN A NUTSHELL

*"LectureShare (<http://www.lectureshare.com/>) lets instructors make lecture notes, audio, and video available to their students - or the world - quickly and easily...LectureShare is about removing communication barriers in learning by providing easy sharing for course materials."*

#### IS IT REALLY FREE?

*"Right now LectureShare is completely free with no limitations, and we're working hard to keep it that way!"* (That is what they say! Let's hope the "right now" statement becomes a long-term project.)

#### YUMMY STUFF

Current Available Features:

##### ***"Instructors***

- ☐ *Give students access to course materials without the burden of maintaining your own webpage or the hassle of complex web-based solutions*
- ☐ *Post audio and video content easily*
- ☐ *Make class announcements that your students will actually read—via e-mail, RSS (coming soon), or SMS*
- ☐ *Effortlessly make your course available to anyone if you choose.*

##### ***Students***

- ☐ *Stay organized with course materials and announcements for all of your classes is gathered in a single location*
- ☐ *Beyond text—enjoy streaming audio and video content along with text and files*
- ☐ *Keep track your way: e-mail, RSS (coming soon), or SMS. No more checking class webpages for updates every day.*



- ❑ *Tap into the power of open source courses on hundreds of topics."*

## MASTERMINDS

- ❑ *Ezra Katz - Mastermind behind LectureShare, as well as the primary developer.*
- ❑ *Nathan Carnes - freelance website developer and graphic designer in charge of design and user experience.*

## WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FUTURE?

*"LectureShare is currently in early beta. You can expect plenty of improvements over the next few months as we gather user feedback. We're working hard to make LectureShare the best platform available for both instructors and students."*

## LEARNING REFLECTION

I learned about this new learning tool via [Jospeh Hart's blog](#) (who learned about it via Jane Knight's blog, and she learned about it via bla,bla,bla,...). I really like the fact that this new easy-to-use learning tool (as far as I know) starts off with only the basic and fundamental features (course materials and announcements) that most lecturers or instructors would like to use to get their online learning adventure (or access) moving ahead. Also, now educators don't need to move around (from LMS to LMS) their course materials should they decide to join another University, College, School or Organization. In short, **Publish Once for All!** Though, it could be difficult for students to keep track of the announcements for each course if the educator is handling one course for multiple classes or Universities (Then again, I am sure they have thought about that!). However, I really like the SMS announcement ability and the upcoming RSS feature (don't need to visit the site for updates).

Overall, these two masterminds behind LectureShare in some ways got to it going before Google, Yahoo and MSN (as I babbled somewhere in the [Future of e-Content Development in Higher Education](#) presentation. Published on Dec. 9, 2005.). However, I do anticipate that for example tools like Google or Yahoo Groups (why not FaceBook, YouTube or MySpace?) can evolve further to enable educators to facilitate an easy-to-use and effective course-related online learning environment. To me the core features that educators would love in addition to managing their course materials and announcements efficiently online, include *social bookmarking* (collection of shared online resources or URLs), *Forum* (Yes, we need to discuss to facilitate the articulation of ideas and learning in relation to the course materials or course), *Quizzes* (Check for understanding), *Assignment* (enable students to submit assignments online), *Survey* (to get



feedback, so that we can improve the course or learning materials. Perhaps, could add a comments or rating section for each resource, too), *Blogs* (quick informal knowledge sharing on the latest relevant updates in the knowledge galaxy), and *Wikis* (Collaborative content development). Hmm, I suppose it is getting complicated and I suppose I could make it more complicated, but these are some of the features that would be useful to engage and motivate the learner to learn, besides being able to access course materials and announcements easily online. In short, the era of publishing course materials or courses to one University (, College, or School) might be of the past in the near future. **Why publish to my students only, when I can also educate the world at the same time for free? :)**

“In teaching you cannot see the fruit of a day's work. It is invisible and remains so, maybe for twenty years.”

*-Jacques Barzun*

## 34. EDUBLOGS AND THE MAGIC BUTTON!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/edublogs-and-magic-button.html>



### WHAT?

Edublogs (<http://www.edublogs.org/>) began its adventure on the 31st of July 2005 in Melbourne, Australia. Since then it has grown to host tens of thousands of blogs (+103,000 blogs and growing!), provide [an enterprise blogging solution](#) for schools and other educational institutions and continue to develop and support what they hope is the best blogging platform and community for educators, anywhere. In addition, they have plans to provide other educational tools in the future.

### FEATURES

- ☐ Contemporary, Customizable Themes
- ☐ Spell-check, Previews, Autosave, Words, Photos, Podcasts, Videos, etc.
- ☐ Import from Other Blogging Sites – or export back to them
- ☐ Great Support and Community
- ☐ Powerful Spam Fighting Tools
- ☐ And much more...



### JUICE

Edublogs is not only a great learning tool, it also **connects you to a worldwide community of educators** (and students). So, if you are thinking about blogging and want to do it within a community of educators, this is certainly an online space worth exploring further. Alright, you might be interested in joining, but what about your existing blog(s). Interestingly, Edublogs provides you with a **MAGIC BUTTON**, which enables you to import posts and comments from other blogging tools such as Blogger, Blogware, LiveJournal, etc. If you don't believe me, you can view my blog, [ZaidLearn imported to Edublogs](#) using the magic button (apparently you can export, too!).



Although, I like the fact that I can import all my stuff from Blogger with one click (The Magic Button!), *I don't like the fact that all my graphics, coloring and formatting are all messed up* (or more messed up than previously!). Though, if you only post text and don't play around too much with the text, you have nothing to worry about (I am sure the dynamic development team will fix this bug soon!). In short, if you have made up your mind to join the Edublogs revolution, you will not need to start all over again, and can easily import your previous blogging stuff.

Also, I like the fact that all *posts are automatically spell-checked!* In addition, there many other features that is unique and exciting about Edublogs including the [Forums](#), Blogs of the hour, and hot topics in the edublogs universe (dynamic meta-tags!).

However, for now *I will continue to use Blogger as my main blogging tool*, but you never know in the future, especially if they keep on adding new engaging and user-friendly learning tools and features (to connect and interact with the amazing growing community of educators and students!). In the mean time, I will stick to my Blogger habit, and use the 'Magic Button' once a while to keep my Edublogs world alive and kicking :)

**“A good teacher is a master of  
simplification and an enemy of simplism.”**  
- Louis A. Berman

### 35. COURSELAB (100% FREE E-LEARNING AUTHORING TOOL?)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/08/courselab-100-free-e-learning-authoring.html>



"CourseLab (<http://courselab.com/>) is a powerful, yet easy-to-use, e-learning authoring tool that offers programming-free WYSIWYG environment for creating high-quality interactive e-learning content which can be published on the Internet, Learning Management Systems (LMS), CD-ROMS and other devices...It can be used in a variety of learning initiatives including **technical training**, **soft skills training** and **compliance certifications**.



Here is a list of some its **yummiest features** ([click here to see the full list](#)):

- ☐ Familiar PowerPoint-like authoring environment;
- ☐ WYSIWYG environment for creating and managing high-quality interactive e-learning content - no HTML or other programming skills required;
- ☐ Unicode support - use any font and encoding supported by the Windows® operating system, including double-byte character sets;
- ☐ Object-oriented Model allows constructing e-learning content of almost any complexity just as easy as you put together the building blocks;
- ☐ Objects are highly customizable;
- ☐ Dynamic HTML based output can be played by most browsers - no Java® or other special player software required for playing created e-learning content;
- ☐ Built-in assessments and tests creation capabilities;
- ☐ **Software Simulations - Embedded Screen Capturing mechanism (without using Adobe Flash® technology) (Costs \$99);**
- ☐ **Import PowerPoint® presentations into the learning material (Costs \$99).**
- ☐ **Additional module templates pack (Costs \$9 Only)"**



Having been away from researching learning technologies for more than one year, I am really thrilled with all the new free learning tools available to educators and learners. During this period of technology ignorance, I have been struggling learning the art of higher-order thinking skills and teaching (or coaching) it to students. Not sure if I have learnt that much, except for asking questions in a more systematic way using tools such as six thinking hats and CoRT.

CourseLab got me excited first (due to its easy-to-use authoring environment) and the super claim posted on its home page "**100% FREE e-learning authoring tool! No time limits. No demo versions** (What about no cost for Extras?)", provides the kind of happiness that can turn into frustration if you do not read between the lines.

However, when you realize that you need to fork out a whopping **\$198** (or 207) to get the really juicy features enabling you to do things that you really want to do (Check the bullets above in red). Although, CourseLab might argue it is not deception or against the law to state that

**100% FREE e-learning authoring tool!  
No time limits. No demo versions.  
DOWNLOAD NOW!**

the authoring tool is 100% , it could make it a bit more obvious that you need to pay if you really want to get the juicy stuff (Extras). They might argue that the authoring tool is free, but you need to pay for the Extras. Though, to me the extras are really the reason why I would be interested in using this tool in the first place. In short, **the 'Extras' is the real deal**. Also, one could argue that this is a great marketing strategy, but overall it is better to get people excited (about 100% free) without indirectly tricking them into it (otherwise they might give CourseLab negative publicity like now). We all know that a company needs money to survive, and that is understandable, but don't use misleading statements such as "100% FREE e-learning authoring tool", which is perhaps legally right, but in my opinion it is an unethical misuse of the original meaning of this phrase.

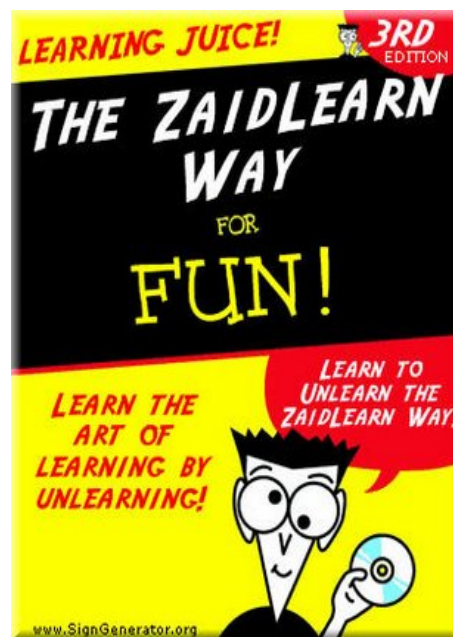
However, for those of you who do not find the CourseLab 'Extras' important or can survive without them, I do recommend using CourseLab. Though, if you are going to spend money, I would actually recommend that you add a bit more (a few hundred) and invest in either [Adobe Captivate](#) or [Articulate](#) :)

**Note to CourseLab:** *I really like your authoring tool, and hopefully you could be more creative about your marketing catch phrase (get rid of the 100% nonsense), I would support and promote this product more. Yes, if you make the 'Extras' free and create sufficient revenue using another creative approach then you would have the education world at your feet.*



## 36. CUSTOM SIGN GENERATOR - CREATE 1000S OF FREE PERSONALIZED GRAPHICS!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/01/custom-sign-generator-create-1000s-of.html>



"CustomSignGenerator.com (<http://www.customsigngenerator.com/>) offers *thousands of free dynamic JPEG, GIF and PNG image creators* (you can make FREE logos, blog headers, parody photos, buttons, banners, email sigs, comics, signs, blinkies/glitters, avatars, support ribbons, wallpapers, labels, celeb spoofs, animations, MySpace/TagWorld clipart, fancy 3D text, presentation clip art, 3D text pics, userbars, barcodes, 3D pics, gag/hoax/prank images, title/header bars, animated GIFs, taggers, fake ads, e-cards, custom gift magnets, etc)! No software needs to be installed (web based image design tools, just choose a template layout) [...more](#) "

Seriously, you can make some really cool personalized graphics to spice up your content with all these cool image creators available (in one master list!). I suppose you would need a bit of time to



explore all these sites before finding something that really gets you excited. Also, you will probably get a headache full of pop-ups (turn your pop-up blocker off!), or new tabs, every time you select a new image creator or graphic. But with a bit of patience, it could be your new gold mine in finding and creating personalized images ***to gain attention and stimulate thinking.***

Here are a few of the cool dynamic image generators you will find in this amazing collection:

- [Sign Generators](#) (500 fun templates)
- [Fake Magazine Covers](#) (100 magazine layouts)
- [Make a Logo](#) (1000+ of possibilities, make signs/headers)
- [Dummies Book Cover Maker](#) (4 styles, change the cover on the DIY learning book covers)
- [Comic Strip Generators](#) (1,500+ cartoon characters)
- [Famous People Message Generators](#) (500+ faces)
- [Animated Text](#) (fill the text form, scrolling marquee, 30 frame animation, for future scrolling LED signs.)

I am simply thrilled to discover this site! If you haven't explored this site before, perhaps it is time. WOW, I am in Time magazine! :)



### 37. WIZIQ - A FREE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM TOOL!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/12/wiziq-free-virtual-classroom-tool.html>



#### WHAT?

On [WizIQ](http://www.wiziq.com/) (<http://www.wiziq.com/>) educators and learners can connect live anywhere in the world from home using this **FREE virtual classroom software**. Inside the virtual classroom you share an interactive synchronized collaborative environment where you can communicate with each other on one-to-one basis using microphone, chat and share whiteboard (similar to blackboard in the classroom), presentation and documents.

#### FEATURES

[WizIQ](http://www.wiziq.com/)'s virtual classroom features include:

- ☐ Two way audio
- ☐ Text chat
- ☐ Multiple participants
- ☐ PowerPoint & PDF sharing
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Media files like gif, jpg, swf, png etc.



- ☐ All sessions are recorded
- ☐ Only you have access
- ☐ Review them later

### LATEST UPDATE!

The free Live Class module for [Moodle](#) is now available. Moodle users can activate a block and an activity from within Moodle to schedule and launch sessions in WiZiQ's virtual classroom.

[Click here](#) for detailed instructions on how to install it, which includes video tutorials.

### REFLECTION

No annoying downloads are required, and [WiZiQ](#)'s Flash-based learning environment works in any web browser and on any operating system. Multiple choice [WiZiQ](#) tests have, recently, been also added to the site. In addition, free [public sessions](#) are offered on an ongoing basis and recorded [completed sessions](#) are available for viewing.

"In future, we will offer certain advanced features on WiZiQ for a monthly subscription fee. However, *basic features on WiZiQ will **always be free*** ([Source](#)).\" Let's hope that also PowerPoint (or file) sharing and multiple participants (say up to 40!) will always remain free.

I have been waiting for years for a free easy-to-use Flash-based virtual classroom (synchronous learning) tool, which also has PowerPoint or file sharing capability. So, [Patricia](#) you have certainly made my day with that great news!

I suppose all the commercial virtual classroom alternatives (Centra, Adobe, WebEx, etc.) will increasingly need to be more creative about making revenue, at least in the education sector. Yeah, very soon Yahoo, Google and MSN (Why not add Facebook, too!) will have their own virtual classrooms with such capability, too.

WiZiQ thanks for initiating the battle for virtual classroom freedom, enabling all educators and learners around the world (with computers and Internet access) to synchronously collaborate, communicate, and learn online for free. I am surprised that Google and the Gang did not think of it before.

Yeah, now we can even integrate WiZiQ with Moodle as an 'Activity Module!' ***This is the one learning tool really missing in Moodle! WiZiQ to the rescue! I love it :)***

## 38. DIMDIM - WORLD'S FREE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/12/dimdim-worlds-free-virtual-classroom.html>

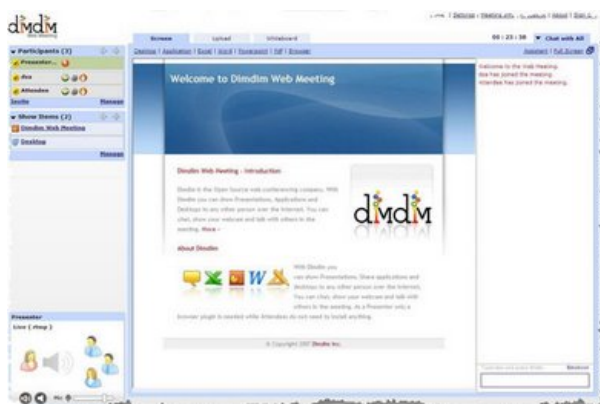


### WHAT?

"dimdim (<http://www.dimdim.com/>) is the **world's first free web meeting service based on the open source platform**. dimdim is a browser-based web 2.0 service that allows anybody to share their desktop, show slides, as well as talk, listen, chat, and broadcast via webcam. dimdim's hosted service is available for free and can be easily used for small gatherings, to seminars with hundreds of attendees. With absolutely no software to download for attendees, dimdim gives everyone the opportunity to hold Web meetings and to customize and brand these meetings."

### JUICE

"**'Powerful simplicity'** is dimdim's mantra. dimdim differs from first generation web meeting solutions, as they were exceedingly expensive, notoriously difficult to implement and impossible to customize. dimdim provides a business-class quality web meeting service that is free to consumers and extremely easy to use, as there is no software to download or maintain."





**Features** include ([Source](#)):

- ☐ Upload & Share Presentations
- ☐ Desktop & Application Sharing
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Multi User Chat
- ☐ Audio and Video
- ☐ On Wire Security
- ☐ Scheduling & Reports
- ☐ Mood Indicator
- ☐ Private labeling
- ☐ Localization
- ☐ Email based support
- ☐ Platform Certification
- ☐ dimdim training
- ☐ Integration with LMS
- ☐ Integration with customer relationship management systems

New features under development include annotations on collaboration work space, active directory integration, Outlook & Google calendar integration, skins / templates, recording & archiving, polls and question manager, etc.

If you want to install dimdim on your own servers, you can download and install the [open source edition](#). Though, keep in mind that "the dimdim open source edition is meant for Developers, Highly Technical Enthusiasts and for usage in Non-Critical Environments. It has all the features of the Enterprise edition and the only difference is that it is more of bleeding edge software. The Enterprise Edition is a much more stable, scalable and reliable piece of software which is fully supported and certified by dimdim, the company. The Open source community supports the Open Source edition." [Click here](#) to explore the different editions offered by dimdim, including the hosted Enterprise Edition, which is not free (but reasonable! Though, I don't like the current rule of only allowing a maximum of 20 participants per room).

In terms of features, interface design, and ease-of-use it is perhaps not as attractive as [WiZiQ](#). On the positive note, you can download the open source edition (value-added!) and install it on





your own server. Better yet, you can also **integrate dimdim with Moodle** ([Integration Guide.pdf](#) and [dimdim-Moodle User Guide.pdf](#)), and that is an exciting prospect with so many Moodle installations and users around the world. I suppose many Moodlers are already exploring dimdim as their free virtual classroom alternative.

Thanks [Patricia Donaghy](#) for sharing with me this juicy FREE virtual classroom tool. Yeah, if you don't like WiZiQ or dimdim, you can always explore [Elluminate](#), which is not really free (free for 3 concurrent users only), but is a user-friendly feature rich cost effective virtual classroom tool.

I suppose Virtual Classroom tools will soon be as free as e-mails, social networking, social bookmarking, file sharing, chatting, wikis, blogging, Skype(ing), LMS, uploading videos, and so on. What's next on the free learning tools menu? Got any predictions? :)

**“A good teacher is one who makes  
himself progressively unnecessary.”**

*- Thomas Carruthers*



## 39. FACEBOOK - STUDY GROUPS (LMS, TOO!)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/01/facebook-study-groups-lms-too.html>



When we think of **Search**, we think of **Google!**

When we think of **LMS**, we think of **Moodle!**

When we think of **Food**, we think of **Noodle?**

Having a tough time getting everyone on the same page in your study group or group project (Yeah, especially in a formal LMS!)? **Study Groups**, a new Facebook application lets you quickly and easily collaborate with your classmates and plan out homework for your courses.

- ☐ Create to-do lists and track who's responsible for what
- ☐ Schedule and agree to meetings
- ☐ Discuss the finer points of this week's assignment
- ☐ Share notes and files in one place
- ☐ Create a public Study Group to collect the thoughts and ideas of users around the world on a given subject.

**When we think of social networking, we think of Facebook!** Not only is Facebook giving Google a tough time (Threat: Advertising Model and Revenue! Soon Search?), It might over time (sooner rather than later!) also evolve into a potential Learning Management System (LMS), or a Course Management System (CMS), as Moodle calls it! With so many innovative companies



producing applications for Facebook, it would not surprise me if Facebook will enable users soon (functionality already there?) to create their own online courses (perhaps even Universities, but with a slight cost to it!), providing basically all the features (quiz, forum, wiki, blog, assignment, content management, announcement, course registration, etc.) that you usually find in LMS/CMS tools. Not only would it be free on the software side, it will require no cost on the hardware and hosting side, too. Yeah, we probably would not even need to register the students, because they would already be on Facebook. This is getting interesting :)

**“Good teachers are costly, but bad  
teachers cost more.”**

*- Bob Talbert*

## 40. SLOODLE = SECOND LIFE + MOODLE

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/12/sloodle-second-life-moodle.html>



### WHAT?

Sloodle (<http://www.sloodle.org/>) is an Open Source project which aims to develop and share useful, usable, desirable tools for supporting education in virtual worlds, making teaching easier. Through engagement with an active community of developers and users, the Sloodle project hopes to develop sound pedagogies for teaching across web-based and 3D virtual learning environments. Sloodle integrates the [Second Life](#) multi-user virtual environment and the [Moodle](#) learning-management system.

### MASTERMINDS

- [Edmund Edgar](#) aka Edmund Earp (developer)
- [Jeremy Kemp](#) aka Jeremy Kabumpo (instructional developer)
- [Daniel Livingstone](#) aka Buddy Sprocket (developer)
- [Paul Andrews](#) aka Optimus Paul
- [D.I. von Briesen](#) aka Icabad Vallejo (moodle evangelist)

### JUICE

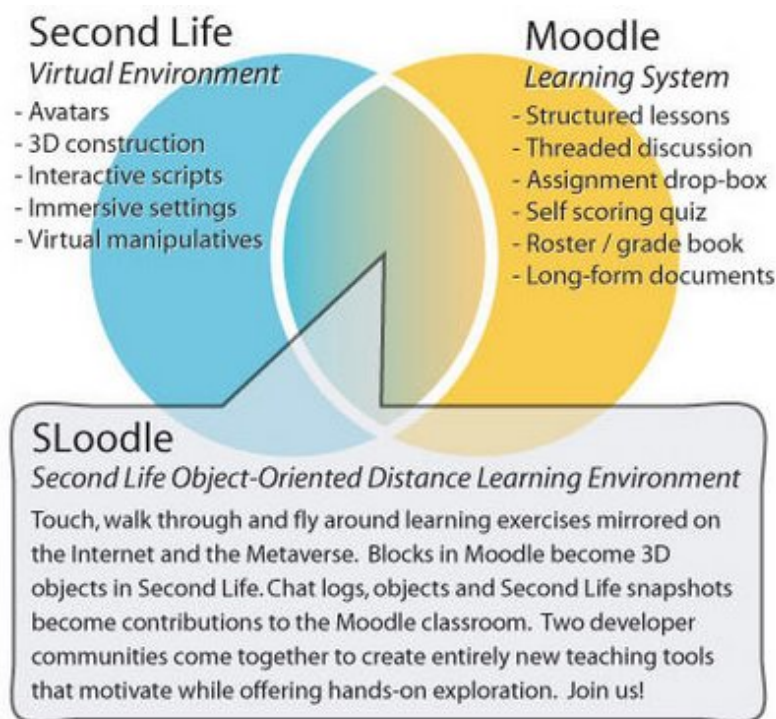
To understand the real story behind this great initiative, perhaps reading the Sloodle whitepaper entitled "[Putting a Second Life "Metaverse Skin on Learning Management Systems"](#)", would give you a deeper understanding about how this project became a reality. If you are interested in setting-up your own Sloodle, you should perhaps first explore their [wiki](#), and watch the [Sloodle Tutorial Series](#).

Since I discovered Second Life a few years back, I have yet to see the beauty of it from a teaching and learning point-of-view (formal education!). However, with projects like Sloodle I am

beginning to see lights at the end of the tunnel. And you know what, I am thinking about also exploring this idea further, and perhaps actually take active part and see how we can blend Moodle and Second Life in our online learning environment in the future. If we can blend these two unique learning spaces to facilitate a more effective and engaging learning environment for our students, why not!

I suppose this is just the beginning, and soon all widely used LMS whether commercial or open source will have **integration modules** enabling us to blend easily virtual worlds with their solutions. *Why reinvent the virtual world, when we already have a few of them, with Second Life leading the way.*

Now, the next step is to move away from the keyboard, joystick and monitor, and instead wear electronic goggles (or helmets) and electronic suits (with '[Back to the Future](#)' kind of shoes!), so that we can truly immerse ourselves into the 3D virtual learning spaces. '[Total Recall](#)' might become a reality sooner than we realize :)



## 41. IF WE DIGG TOGETHER WE WILL STUMBLEUPON SOME DEL.ICIO.US MAHALO SOUP!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/01/if-we-digg-together-we-will-stumbleupon.html>

### If We **Digg** Together...

Digg (<http://www.digg.com/>) is a place for people to discover and share content from anywhere on the web. From the biggest online destinations to the most obscure blog, Digg surfaces the best stuff as voted on by their users.



### ...We Will **StumbleUpon**...

StumbleUpon (<http://www.stumbleupon.com/>) helps you discover and share great websites. It uses ratings to form collaborative opinions on website quality. When you stumble, you will only see pages which friends and like-minded stumblers have recommended. This helps you discover great content you probably wouldn't find using a search engine.



### ...Some **Del.icio.us**...

Del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us/>) is a social bookmarking (collection of favorites) website. The primary use of del.icio.us is to store your bookmarks online, which allows you to access the same bookmarks from any computer and add bookmarks from anywhere, too. On del.icio.us, you can use tags to organize and remember your bookmarks, which is a much more flexible system than folders. In addition, you can share your favorites with friends, family, coworkers, and the del.icio.us community.



### ...**Mahalo** Soup!

Mahalo (<http://www.mahalo.com/>) (Hawaiian for 'Thank you') is a human-powered search engine that creates organized, comprehensive, and spam free search results for the most popular search terms. Their search results only include great links (or links filtered by humans!).





If Google's arsenal of learning tools (including blogs) does not get you where you want, these four human-powered social learning tools (Fantastic Four!) could do the trick. ***Sometimes, you need collective human filtered intelligence to find the stuff you are looking for, and other times Google Search is sufficient.*** Find the right blend and you might have a winning formula to finding amazing learning stuff in this amazingly fast growing information galaxy (overload!). I suppose sometimes machine-powered search engines need help to understand the contextualized meaning of Apple, Bush and Paris :)

“A good teacher is a good student first.  
By repeating his lessons, he acquires  
excellence.”

- M. K. Soni

## 42. ANY FREE ONLINE SURVEY/POLLING TOOLS?

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/03/any-free-online-surveypolling-tools-1st.html>



"...There are still millions of students and educators in the Schools, Colleges and Universities around the world who are doing research, conducting surveys and spending a lot of time collecting data, providing them often with little time to analyze and reflect the findings (critical/creative thinking aspect!). However, by providing them with a **free easy-to-use online survey tool** (alternative or complimentary option to their research) with basic features to create and conduct online surveys, collect the data, and display the results/reports in text and visual format (with exporting options to Excel, SPSS, etc.), could do miracles from an educational point-of-view... ([Source](#))"

I did once write an [online letter to Google](#) (October 12th, 2007) about our need for a free easy-to-use online survey tool, but I never got a reply. I suppose they get millions of e-mails every day, so why answer my one, unless the idea is really great (and innovative!), or I am NEO. With the exception of Google's polling tool in Blogger, I have yet to see any innovative progress from them. Microsoft seem to be too busy with their upcoming [WorldWide Telescope \(WWT\)](#) (Great surf-the-galaxy tool!), and who wants to get locked into Facebook's limited 70+ million user community doing polling and surveys (Confidentiality! Yeah, we can trust Facebook!). Yahoo? No idea! In short, the big players seem to be slow on this front, or perhaps they are planning to acquire one soon from the growing crowd of innovative online survey tools already out there.





## 11 FREE ONLINE SURVEY/POLLING TOOLS

Here are 11 free online survey/polling tools (Selected using my sixth sense!), which you might want to explore further ([Source](#)):

1. [SurveyMonkey.com](#)  
Powerful tool for creating and running web surveys (including visual reporting). The free version provides several limitations (e.g. limited number of questions and respondents), but if you are creative you can do your stuff. Anyway, the commercial version is quite affordable (if needed), so why worry!
2. [PollDaddy](#)  
Create free online surveys (e.g. market research) and polls. Excellent for polls!
3. [FreeOnlineSurveys.com](#)  
Create online surveys, polls and questionnaires for any number of uses.
4. [fo.reca.st](#)  
Allows you to design free online surveys, collect responses from the visitors of your blog or website, analyze them and finally present the survey results.
5. [SurveyGizmo](#)  
Web surveys, Polls, Forms, Quizzes, Landing Pages. Free and commercial version.
6. [Quibblo](#)  
A free tool that enables you easily to create your own quizzes, fun surveys & tests online.
7. [Kwik Online Surveys](#)  
An easy-to-use survey development tool that enables you easily to send surveys & questionnaires by Email, YouTube, Facebook or posted on online Forums.
8. [LimeSurvey.org](#)  
A good open source survey tool. You need to download and install on a server. It includes +20 different question types, and basic statistical and graphical analysis with an export facility.
9. [VTSurvey](#)  
Is a web-based tool which enables end users to autonomously create and run online surveys, feedback or registration forms (4 question types). You need to download and Install on a server. Although, it has limited tools, question types and reporting features, it is extremely easy-to-use.
10. [BuzzDash](#)  
Create and share polls. Built upon individual polling modules called buzzbites™,



BuzzDash provides a real-time forum where people can solicit, measure and share opinions on nearly any issue.

11. [Zoho Polls](#)

Can create and share polls.

If you want a more comprehensive list of survey/polling tools, mashing-up both commercial and free ones, I strongly recommend that you visit [Jane Knight's amazing directory of learning tools](#) (including **49 survey/polling tools!** Trust me, this list will grow!).

Oops, I got to get back to my vacation from blogging. If you are wondering again what I am doing during my holiday from blogging, [CLICK HERE](#). Yes, I am building my arsenal of del.icio.us links (230+ and growing!). I have been collecting great links since 2001, so I got a lot to filter and add :)

“What the teacher is, is more important  
than what he teaches.”

- Karl Menninger

## 43. PETER'S ONLINE TYPING COURSE (EXTREMELY USEFUL!)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/01/peters-online-typing-course-extremely.html>



### TURN YOURSELF INTO A TYPING HERO!

"By the time you finish this course (<http://www.typing-lessons.org/>), you will be able to confidently type all the letters, numbers and the most common symbols, with proper **ten-finger touch typing technique**. Although there is some use of interactive multimedia here, this course is **minimalist** in nature, purposely without many of the bells and whistles common to some of the other typing sites and CD-ROMs out there. Frankly, such things often end up simply adding a lot of clutter, and consequently produce a counter-educational effect. The focus here is on sound pedagogy, and facilitating progressive and efficient (but hopefully not boring!) learning. I believe there is everything here necessary for you to become an accomplished typist in the shortest amount of time possible. Plus, this course has the great advantage of being **FREE**, without the need of registration, or any such **silly marketing-things!**" - Peter Hudson

From what I have learned after observing many **P**rofessors and **S**enior **L**ecturers (**PSL**) in action, is that they often lack the ability to type quickly. It is often the one, two, three, four fingers magic show! This typing course is great, because it is easy-to-read-learn-practice, and you don't need to save penguins or score hoops doing it, which might not appeal to PSL. It wouldn't also surprise me if there is a strong correlation between poor typing skills and de-motivation to facilitate online learning (e-mails, forums, chatting, etc.). In short, the faster you type, the more time you have to



think (Better yet, do it at the same time!). The beauty comes when you are capable of typing as fast as (or faster than) you think. Also, then you don't need to say, "**What was I thinking again?**"

If you find this free online typing course a bit boring, and want more 'bells and whistles', here are three (3) more free typing tutors/tutorials you might want to explore (Via [Patricia Donaghy](#)):

- ❑ [Rapid Typing](#) - A typing game, where the training takes place in a "virtual picturesque underwater world" adding some fun to the learning.
- ❑ [PowerTyping](#) - An online free typing tutor for kids, students and adults alike!
- ❑ [BBC Typing Tutorial](#) - Aimed at the younger kids, but is great fun for anyone learning typing.

So, if we are not '[Billy the Kid](#)' in typing, I suppose we have another potential New Year's mission for 2008. Yeah, I am practicing it right now :)

"I hear and I forget. I see and I  
remember. I do and I understand."

-Chinese Proverb

#### 44. VISIBLE BODY - 3D HUMAN ANATOMY VISUALIZATION TOOL

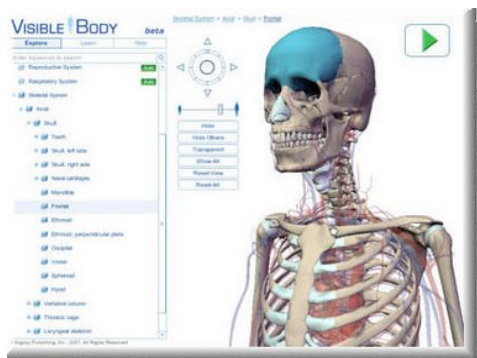
Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/01/visible-body-3d-human-anatomy.html>

Argosy's Visible Body (<http://www.visiblebody.com/>) is a great and comprehensive **3D human anatomy visualization tool**, which includes 3D models of over 1,700 anatomical structures, including all major organs and systems of the human body.

To access this amazing 3D human anatomy learning tool, you just need to register, and then it is **FREE** to play!

##### FEATURES

- ☐ Complete, fully interactive, 3D human anatomy model
- ☐ Detailed models of all body systems
- ☐ Dynamic search capability
- ☐ Easy-to-use, 3D controls
- ☐ Seamless compatibility with Internet Explorer



If you are teaching human anatomy or anything related, you certainly have an amazing learning tool to engage learners with. Learners will be able to discover our anatomy in an interactive and 3D way (On their own, too!), which is really worlds' apart from the way I learned about the human anatomy (A boring static plastic skeleton doll!).

So, if your lecturer does not know about this 'Visible Body' learning tool, perhaps you should suggest it to him. I suppose the lecturer can use the plastic skeleton doll in class (it has also probably evolved significantly!), and then students can have group or individual assignments to explore the human anatomy in a more interactive way using this 3D virtual learning tool, which also includes [tutorials](#).

If you find this amazing learning resource too complicated (or heavy to load!), you could always explore [BBC's Human Body and Mind](#) site, which is also great :)



## 45. FREESCREENCAST + 4 MORE TOOLS!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/freescreencast-record-upload-and-share.html>



**RECORD** Your Screen, **UPLOAD** And **SHARE** Online With Ease!

### HOW?

☐ **Step 1**

[Download and install the free screencast recording software.](#) Record and save a ready to go flash file to your computer or online:

☐ **Step 2**

[Create an account to share your screencast with the world.](#) Free hosting of your screencast. Publish to the internet, and then embed your screencast in your website or blog.

☐ **Step 3**

That's it! Oh, do it again!

**Example:** [How to embed a freescreencast.com screencast into Moodle](#)

### MORE FREE SCREENCASTING TOOLS

☐ [Webinaria](#)

Create and share software demos online with their screen recording/ screencast software.

☐ [Jing](#)

Snap a picture of anything on your desktop. Record a video of what you do, or what you see, Instantly uploaded. Share in email, IM, or blogs.

❑ [Wink](#)

A Tutorial and Presentation creation software, primarily aimed at creating tutorials on how to use software (like a tutor for MS-Word/Excel etc). Using Wink you can capture screenshots, add explanations boxes, buttons, titles etc and generate a highly effective tutorial for your users (**No direct uploading services!**).

❑ [CamStudio](#)

Enables you to record all screen and audio activity on your computer and create industry-standard AVI video files and using its built-in SWF Producer can turn those AVIs into bandwidth-friendly Streaming Flash videos (SWFs) . No upload services to the Internet (**No direct uploading services!**)



The real problem today is not finding free learning tools, but figuring out which one to use. When I started this blog, I was wondering what to write about (and whether I could keep on discovering juicy learning stuff!). Currently, the problem is actually filtering out the learning juice overload, and zooming in on the really yummy stuff (according to my limited knowledge). I'm Lovin it :)

“To teach is to learn twice.”

-Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, 1842





## 46. EDUTOOLS (DECISION-MAKING TOOLS FOR E-LEARNING)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/08/edutools-decision-making-tools-for-e.html>

*"WCET's EduTools provides independent reviews, side-by-side comparisons, and consulting services to assist decision-making in the e-learning community."*

- ❑ [Course Management System](#) – Compare reviews of the CMS products most commonly used in higher education and also used by many K-12 virtual schools.
- ❑ [Online Course Evaluation Project](#) – Compare reviews of online college, Advanced Placement®, and high school courses as conducted by the Monterey Institute of Technology and Education• [WCALO Reviews of AP® Courses](#)
- ❑ View the results of research projects: [Learning object repository software](#), [Student services products](#), [e-Learning Policies](#) and [ePortfolios](#)

*(EduTools is owned and operated by the WCET – the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications.)"*



EduTools has been around for a few years already, but recently (Nov 2006) it has re-launched its project as a community-driven site, beginning with the Course Management System (CMS) site. It has a wonderful set of **FREE tools** that enable you evaluate CMS, online courses, e-learning policies, learning object repository software, etc (URLs above).

I especially like EduTools CMS tool, where you can get third-party reviews systematically customized to your preferences and needs (check-box whatever you want) on product information, side-by-side product comparisons, and making a decision (6 step process: Select Products, Custom Products, Choose Features, Custom Criteria, Apply Weights, and finally Assign Scores, and then 'Voila' the decision results are there for your evaluation team to further analyze (I wish it was that simple!).

Having said that you better use commercial e-learning decision-making tools from [Brandon-Hall](#) and [Bersin & Associates](#), if you are planning to compare tools such as **SumTotal** and **Saba** (It



might cost you a bit, but it could save you from wasting precious time and buckets of golden coins later). EduTools caters for now specifically to the higher education and K-12 community, and these particular two CMS are not currently on the product list (probably due to the fact that there are not many in these sectors using them.) Though, I do hope they will be added later, because it would be interesting to see how these two Lamborghinis would do compared to the rest of the bunch, especially against David **Moodle** (Open Source) and Goliath **Blackboard** (Commercial).



Interestingly, if you are stuck for example with choosing between Blackboard or Moodle, this CMS tool would be of great help to facilitate a better decision (in addition you could use the [feature list](#) to see whether other tools are also up to the mark).

Actually, I could go on talking about CMS, LMS, LCMS, VLE, Campus Management until the break of dawn as this was my area of specialty in the past (probably need some catching up now!). Though, whatever decision making tool you use to assist a better decision, you need people that know what they are talking about, and have the knowledge and experience to not get swayed when the pitching starts with feature fireworks from super product presentations getting the top management excited. If you do not have the expertise within the organization, I suppose you would need to outsource it to some qualified consultants, or some amazing people out there in the cyber galaxy willing to assist for free with their expertise (Wishful thinking, but surprisingly they might exist). However, EduTools provide excellent tools to keep the consultants on their toes, because they need to be more constructive and meaningful than what these tools can do with a few clicks :)

So, EduTools can play an important role to support you in making a better choice. In addition, here are my brief bulleted CMS evaluation criteria (to get you going):

- ❑ **Core Features Comparison** - Make sure you create your own criteria list (based on feedback from all potential stake holders and reflecting your full administrative and teaching and learning process) differentiating the essential and nice to have features. Study the [EduTools decision making tool](#) to get a better idea, if you are not sure.
- ❑ **Ease-of-use** - If the solution is not easy-to-use and learn (after a bit of testing) for students, academic staff, and administrators you should simply dump it out of the list. No point buying a Ferrari that can't get out of the garage.



- ☐ **Ease-of-Customization** - If you cannot customize (say 90%) of the CMS interface design and configure the features according to your needs and preferences without the help from the vendor or hard-coding, the product is perhaps not flexible to survive in your real world.
- ☐ **Ease-to-Integrate** with other existing systems in your organization (e.g. e-mail, CRM, ERP, etc).
- ☐ **e-Learning Standards Compliant** - SCORM, IMS, etc.
- ☐ **Ease-of-Upgrading** - Make sure you can afford it, and read all the details regarding this issue with hawk-eyes.
- ☐ **T&L Features & Ease-of-use** - There is no compromise here, because this is the real juice that is going to enable the academic staff (or Professor) to captain the mother ship (courses) through the galaxy engaging and collaborating with the students in the most inspiring learning environment (Quizzes, blogs, wikis, journals, chat, virtual classroom, instant messaging, forum, social bookmarking, podcasting, etc).
- ☐ *Alright, the rest of the juice we can talk about over lunch :)*

Actually, the real headache is not selecting an LMS, but the actual implementation of it. Though, if you can blend effectively the informal and formal learning part, and make learning fun during the journey, you have a great chance of disruptive success growth.

Finally, any CMS or more appropriately **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)** needs at least one inspiring, passionate and easy-to-communicate with "Oracle" or "Captain" that plays a critical role in facilitating (guiding, supporting, training, having fun learning with, can count on, etc.) the rest of the inspired team (students, educators, administrators) to explore the knowledge galaxy with all the wonderful learning tools available.

Now, does your VLE have such a person or team?

## 47. 50 WEB 2.0 WAYS TO TELL A STORY (ALAN LEVINE)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/12/50-web-20-ways-to-tell-story-alan.html>

### WHAT?

"It was not long ago that producing multimedia digital content required expensive equipment and technical expertise; we are at a point now where ***we can create compelling content with nothing more complex than a web browser***. This presentation reviews lessons learned in exploring 50 web sites (tools) for creating content via slideshows, timelines, media mixers, comic strips, and presentation makers—and [shows how the same story can be told 50 different ways](#)" - Alan Levine



Actually, Alan Levine's presentation shows how the same story can be told 49 different ways, using 49 different free Web 2.0 tools (Amazingly useful anyway!)! If you are looking for free web 2.0 tools (to tell a story!) and reflections on using them, Alan Levine's presentation below, is simply a great starting point (Click on the graphic below. Yes!).



URL: <http://www.slideshare.net/cogdog/50-web-20-ways-to-tell-a-story>



## JUICE

WOW! I also like his formula for conducting a **Digital Storytelling** workshop using free web 2.0 tools, which goes something like this:

1. **Design** a basic story concept that can be created in a web 2.0 tool using images, audio, and/or video.
2. **Create** it quickly using one of 50 different web tools that are free to use (Don't force one particular tool upon the participants, but instead let them choose from a bunch!).
3. **Share** all the created stuff (by participants) using a wiki site with reflections on the value of the tools used.

What about some guidelines and tips? It is as easy as 1-2-3! Here we go:

1. [Outline a Story Idea](#)
2. [Find Some Media](#)

"The media files you use in your story have to be ones that are licensed or shared with permission to re-use; this is the only way you can safely then share your new creation knowing it does not contain any copyrighted material. So just finding a picture via Google is not satisfactory. For each media file you find, document the source by title and URL and find a person or organization to use to give credit." [This link](#) provides you links (URLs) to many excellent (free) media resource sites, if you are looking for multimedia, images, audio, and videos (e.g. [Common Content](#), [Pictures from Old Books](#), [CC Hits](#), and [Open Video Project](#)).

3. [Pick a Tool to Build Your Story](#)

Here you will find more than 50 free web tools you can use to create a story. Here are several of those free tools identified by Alan Levine in a blitz:

- **Slideshow Tools:** [Bubbleshare](#), [Fabrik](#) and [RockYou](#)
- **Timeline Tools:** [Dandelife](#), [OurStory](#) and [xtimeline](#)
- **Mixer Tools:** [Voice Threads](#), [VUVOX](#) and [FLEKTOR](#)
- **Comic Tools:** [gnomz](#), [ComicsSketch](#) and [Toondoo](#)
- **Scrapbook Tools:** [Tabblo](#) and [Scrapblog](#)
- **Map Tools:** [Mapwing](#), [Google My Maps](#) and [Wayfaring](#)
- **Flickr Tools:** [Flickr Tell a Story in 5 Frames](#) and [Flickr Six Word Story](#)
- **Audio Tools:** [Podcast People](#) and [Blabberize](#)



- **Video Tools:** [Jumpcut](#), [Splashcast](#) and [eyespot](#)
- **Presentation Tools:** [Slideshare](#), [Google Presenter](#) and [Zoho Show](#)

I can't imagine creating the same story using 49 different web 2.0 tools (I would go crazy!!) However, Alan Levine did it, and also made his adventure available to us in the shape of a [SlideShare presentation](#) (which perhaps reflects the power of this tool, too!). When a person goes to such lengths to explore the different free web 2.0 tools, we have to appreciate such great efforts, and of course spread the news, so that others can also learn from it.

It would be interesting to know, how many free web 2.0 (or content development/learning) tools we can find on the web today? I would probably start figuring this out by exploring [Jane Knight's growing directory of over 2,300 learning tools](#) ranging from "traditional" course and content development tools through E-Learning 2.0 collaboration and sharing tools as well as tools for personal learning. Though, this directory combines freeware/open source and commercial tools, so we would need to do a bit of weeding and filtering to get some concrete numbers.

Looking at the amazing evolution of free web 2.0 tools, we can expect in the future increasingly more new great (and rubbish!) easy-to-use tools to explore, use, share, reflect and enjoy. I suppose we have reached a stage when at least one new free web 2.0 tool is launched every day. Thanks to online advertising and networking, being free could eventually mean big bucks (YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Skype, etc.).

I suppose the real challenge is *finding the right tool for the right occasion*. Good luck... :)

“Experience teaches only  
the teachable.”

- Aldous Huxley



## 48. TOONDOO - CREATE YOUR OWN CARTOONS & COMICS!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/toondoo-create-your-own-cartoons-comics.html>



### WHAT?



ToonDoo (<http://www.toondoo.com/>) is a reasonably easy-to-use **FREE comic-creating tool** (from [Jambav](#)), enabling basically anyone to create their own cool comics (or graphics).

### JUICE

I discovered this interesting comic-creating tool from [Patricia Donaghy's JUICY blog](#). What I like about it is that you can create your own comic strips, share them or insert them in your blogs with just a few clicks and drag-n-drops! In short, you can within one online learning environment **create, publish, share, discuss**, participate in contests, and even feature in the ToonDoo Hall of Fame, if you are really good! Not bad!

As Patricia's says, it is a "new way of expression for those who do not have the talent to draw". In addition, to creating simple [ToonDoos](#) consisting of 1 to 3 screens, you can also create [ToonBooks](#) by combining unlimited [ToonDoos](#). I haven't tried the ToonBooks yet, but I found the ToonDoos experience quite positive. This Flash-based comic-creating tool is reasonably user-friendly, and it gives us access to a great library of cool graphics, and some dynamic features (e.g. drag-n-drop graphics).





Though, creating comics online really requires us to have a good Internet access to do things at the speed our creative mind often craves for. Also, I noticed limitations on resizing graphics (only four levels). However, this is also strength, as it makes it easy for children to resize with four 'apparent' obvious levels of sizing (primary user target!). According to Rajendran (from [jambav.com](http://jambav.com)), for the professionals, who wouldn't mind some mouse-jugglery for an extra feature, they have provided a **Ctrl-click feature** that enables you to resize and rotate graphics smoothly any way you like. In addition, the Ctrl-click feature allows you to change emotions on people's faces, change body postures on character bodies, and much more. Also, ToonDoo provides features that other competitors lack (according to Rajendran), including these two gems:

- ☐ [TraitR](#) - Your own personal completely customizable character generator.
- ☐ [ImagineR](#) - Upload your own photographs, goofify them, embed them into cartoons, and even grab images from the web to make a cartoon of them.

Coming to think of it, if I had access to ToonDoo's graphics library in my PowerPoint authoring environment, it would simply be great! Yes, perhaps they should have a plug-in enabling us to create our comics offline in tools like PowerPoint, and then with one click ('Publish' button on the ToonDoo's drop-down menu in PowerPoint) we can publish our comics online (or in PowerPoint!) without any hassle. Now that would be really cool! Although, ToonDoo has its minor limitations (at least the free version!), I certainly enjoyed playing around with it. To sum up, **ToonDoo is a cool and useful tool that can enable anyone to add some customized cartoonish spice to their learning content :)**

If ToonDoo is not what you are looking for, perhaps you should explore some other comic-creating tools. [Patricia](#) recommends three (3) other comic/cartoon-creating tools, which we can explore:

- ☐ [Witty](#) - A comic creation site which enables you to create a three-strip comic ([example on podcasting](#)). Based on [Witty](#) comics, the [ComicCreator](#) is a [Widged](#) inspired flash production enabling you to create your own 3-strip comic.
- ☐ [Kerpoof](#) - A fun tool for creating cartoons.
- ☐ [Makebeliefscomix](#) - Another comic strip creating site.

If you are planning to add some engaging cartoonish spice to your learning content, one of these four tools mentioned above might just be right for you. Or perhaps you still prefer PowerPoint :)

## 49. BLACKLE AND MY INSPIRATIONAL SANDCASTLE ADVENTURE!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/12/blackle-energy-saving-search-make.html>



***Blackle = Energy Saving Search!***

### WHAT?

Blackle (<http://www.blackle.com/>) was created by [Heap Media](#) (Founded in Sydney, Australia in 2005) to remind us all of the need to take [small steps](#) in our everyday lives to save energy. Blackle searches are powered by Google Custom Search.

### HOW?

Blackle saves energy because the screen is predominantly black. "Image displayed is primarily a function of the user's color settings and desktop graphics, as well as the color and size of open application windows; a given monitor requires more power to display a white (or light) screen than a black (or dark) screen." [Roberson et al, 2002](#) (PDF)

"There is a significant difference in energy consumption between black and white screens for CRT monitors. CCFL LCD monitors do not show as much difference, however, many of the coming monitor technologies are expected to show a significant difference. **Technology is constantly changing but the need to take steps to save energy is constant** ([Source](#))."

### RESULTS

In January 2007 a blog post titled [Black Google Would Save 750 Megawatt-hours a Year](#)

proposed the theory that a black version of the Google search engine would save a fair bit of energy due to the popularity of the search engine.

According to Blackle, **337,107.747 Watt hours** have been saved until now (4th Dec, 2007!). Congratulations for making a difference!

### ANOTHER IDEA!

Alright, I love the idea, and I suppose I should use less colors in my blog. So, I am feeling a bit guilty right now! Though, Blackle's black and white color combination might not suit all of us (Programming geeks would probably love it!), and perhaps there could be a compromise (with a bit of additional creativity) by enabling us to use less colors than normal, or shades of Watt saving colors. In other words, maybe Blackle could also be customizable enabling us to select our own favorite '*Watt Saving Colors*'. Yes, then it could calculate the differences, so that we know what differences we are making, and feel good that we are at least making a small difference. I suppose '**Colorle**' could be Blackle's little sister :)

### SANDCASTLE ADVENTURE

In addition to using Blackle, ***why don't we stop buying our kids toys***, too (Not sure if ToysRus would agree with that one!). In the olden days, kids used to make their own toys with whatever they had, or found around in the neighborhood (Some people still do!). Now, if kids don't have TV, Internet, or their game consoles, they are often lost for ideas on how to spend their free time (I suppose this also applies to some grown-ups, too!).



I just came home from a holiday yesterday (Pangkor Beach Resort!), and I got to admit that I had a ball creating my first big *sandcastle* there for a long time. While my kids were playing, and my wife probably wondering why I was so serious about building this sandcastle, I was rediscovering something that I had never really appreciated before. Me, myself with my hands, sand, plastic cup and my own imagination, built a sand castle that I am so proud of that I have



even posted a couple of pictures of it here (from two different angles!). I suppose it won't win any sandcastle competition, but it did teach me a few valuable lessons.

First, forget Lego and all the other artificial creative building toys. *If you can get your hands on a lot of **sand, clay** or **snow**, perhaps you should use them instead.* By doing so, we can make a small difference on the environment, our fitness, and importantly our imagination. With Lego our imagination is kind of limited to the type and number of pieces we have. However, with moist sand (clay, or snow) we are basically limited only to our own imagination. Not only that, while Lego is more of a mental game, building for example a sandcastle you also need to roll-up your sleeves and get your hands dirty. Not only are we tickling our imagination, but we are also getting a small workout, perhaps some sun (Vitamin C), and fresh air (if possible!). Yes, it can also be therapeutically relaxing, too.

Hmm, okay it is a bit much not to buy our kids toys (and expect them to create their own!), but we *should perhaps educate them to want toys that cause less **global warming, pollution, health hazards**, and importantly don't destroy their **imagination**.* By doing so, [Mattel](#) (and the rest!), would get their acts together faster, and [ToysRus](#) will increasingly sell toys that are friendlier to the environment, our health, and our imagination. If we adults make a change first, our kids will slowly follow, and certainly the big players like Mattel will learn fast and adapt. Perhaps, the world needs a new innovative Toys creator called '**ToysGreen**' to lead the way :)

“The art of teaching is the art of  
assisting discovery.”

-Mark Van Doren

## 50. SPICE UP YOUR BORING LMS WITH GOOGLE LIVELY?

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/07/spice-up-your-boring-lms-with-google.html>



### GOOGLE LIVELY

A free **browser-based 3D virtual environment** (<http://www.lively.com/html/landing.html>) that enables easy integration to social networking tools such as MySpace, Facebook, OpenSocial, and Google gadgets like Picasa and Youtube. With Google Lively, users' friends' lists, feeds, and logins are tied directly to the social network. In addition, virtual environments are embeddable on any Web page with a snippet of code that can then be viewed as a full 3D environment, based in part on Emergent's Gamebryo engine, after downloading a roughly 9 megabyte plugin ([Source](#)).

### THINGS I LIKE...

Firstly, there is **no need to create a new account** to get started. With my Gmail account I can simply register using it.

Secondly, you only need to **download a small plugin** before you can explore Google Lively for real. One up on Second Life! However, comparing Second Life with Google Lively is like comparing Nintendo Wii with Sony Playstation 3 (or Xbox). Different galaxies and wars, targeting different aliens! While Second Life brought us new 3D virtual learning possibilities, Google Lively will bring virtual worlds to the masses. At least that is what they are targeting with this easy-to-use tool. If we want to compare Google Lively to other virtual worlds, I suppose we could compare it with [Vivaty](#) and [IMVU](#), which are more similar.



Thirdly, Google Lively is also really **easy to learn and use**. No user guide is needed, trust me! Within minutes of discovering it, I was able to create my own cool avatar and virtual room; without much hassle. Basically, you can create or assemble your own stuff from a huge catalog of available shells (rooms), furniture, clothes, etc. Actually, you don't really create new stuff, but instead mash-up yourself and environment from available virtual goods from the fast growing catalog. This catalog is being nurtured and expanded by Google's development team (led by Jeff Matsuda, formerly at Warner Bros.) and a 200+-person team of international contractors.

Fourthly, Google Lively can be **easily integrated with existing social networking tools** such as MySpace and Facebook. Also, users can add content from Google sites like YouTube and Picasa. I suppose Google Lively will eventually be integrated with Google Earth and the rest of the relevant Google gadgets. I can imagine transporting myself to Oxford University (England) in Google Earth and having a Google lively chat with [Tim Berners Lee](#).

Fifthly, you can **easily express yourself** with a couple of clicks, whether orally or physically. For example, the available portfolio of animations enable you to puke, stick out your tongue, kick someone down, dance, jump, scream, be happy, and even get really angry. In short, I am sure you can evolve your emotional intelligence by exploring your true self with all these animations, which are just a few clicks away.

Sixthly, the **virtual rooms operate kind of independently**, meaning you can't build a huge wall or a naked statue in front of another person's virtual property to annoy or blackmail them. Instead, you can discover new spaces or virtual rooms searching the catalog of rooms. Actually, Google lively is not really a virtual world, but a fast growing bunch of separate virtual rooms.

Finally, it could be a great place to **socialize, make friends and have some fun**. Enough! let's move on!

### **THINGS I DON'T LIKE...**

First, I am not going to encourage my young kids to socialize there (at least for now)! Although, we cannot create our own animations and stuff, we are of course allowed to use our imagination to explore the rest. Of course that is exciting, but then again not always appropriate for everyone.



For example, one virtual room I found, was entitled "Free S.." (you can guess the rest!) with a metadata description saying, "Title says it all". I suppose sooner or later the community will self-regulate itself from such things (or encourage more!), or perhaps we could have different virtual worlds consisting of specific themes or areas of interest.

Also, if we strip Google Lively down, it is not much we can do in terms of constructive learning (Then again that is not its main agenda either, as far as I know!). Currently, it is basically avatars, rooms, chat and a growing catalog of all sorts of virtual goods to decorate our virtual spaces. It is basically **a chat system that you can visually spice up**. Though,



being Google I am sure they will increasingly add or integrate more features (e.g. forum, virtual classroom, whiteboard, puzzles, games) and provide more flexibility to users in terms of constructing content and learning possibilities. In short, it is quite limited for synchronous and asynchronous learning. I suppose Second Life is still miles ahead here! Yes, I would like to have my virtual lab enabling me to visualize, demonstrate and collaborate on experiments with my students.

Also, it would be nice if we were provided with more **features to protect ourselves from cyber bullies** out there. As I was wondering in one of the rooms, I saw with my naked eyes a Russian mafia looking avatar slamming a beautiful young lady several times to the floor. Then he went on to beat up a 3-foot white teddy bear. Although, they were probably having fun exploring all the cool animations we can do, I am not sure a Professor would appreciate such treatment during a visit to the student's virtual lounge.

I can imagine how a lively lecture or tutorial might turn out in such an environment. When a student gets bored with the Professor's lecture, he goes over and kicks him to the ground, and then pukes all over him. Then the rest joins in! At least the Professor might get the point that his lecture probably needs improvement. But then again, the Professor was kind of distracted by the beautiful avatar girl in bikini.





You might also get frustrated with a ***new pop-up for every virtual room you visit*** (and a request to login again every time). Interestingly, I was in three different rooms at once, using three different avatars. Yes, I can imagine the lecturer being happy with a full class of virtual students, and then later finding out that all the students cloned themselves away to another room.

Oh, I forgot to mention that my Firefox browser slowed down and simply crashed during my Google Lively adventure. This could be due to several reasons, so I will not dwell upon it here.

### **LMS + LIVELY = LEARNING + JOY**

Let's take off our negative hat, and look at the possibilities a browser-based 3D virtual environment can bring to our online learning environment. I can imagine integrating Google Lively (Student Lounge) with [Moodle](#). Alright, with the existing features it might not be the right place to conduct lectures, tutorials, lab experiments, etc. However, most [LMS](#) that I have explored do not have an exciting online space for students to simply to hangout, connect, socialize and make friends. Using a [LMS](#) can often be a lonely experience, but tools like Google Lively could spice that up (at least for the students).

But then again some lecturers might get a ***shock of their life*** when they visit the virtual student lounge for the first time (Imagine! Perhaps they should be banned from there!). I suppose if some of the avatar animations could be excluded, or educators were given some super powers that would help. At least they might avoid a potential virtual physical or sexual harassment.

Hmm, by the time we establish all the ***rules of virtual engagement***, students would have vanished to other virtual rooms where they can be their virtual self. In other words, perhaps students should set up their own rooms independently from their educational institution and LMS. Anyway, since Google is behind this Lively 3D virtual world, we can expect a lot of interesting new enhancements and features in the near future. It wouldn't surprise me if we soon are provided with ***an easy-to-use virtual learning toolbox***, with all sorts of interesting features and tools, empowering us with dynamic possibilities to facilitate engaging learning.

However, I couldn't help noticing while searching the catalog that every virtual item had a ***'Price' tag*** hanging over it. Although, all the virtual goods are free for now, would that remain when things get more juicy? :)

## 51. DATABASE BLOG LISTING FREE SOFTWARE AND RESOURCES

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/01/database-blog-listing-free-software-and.html>



### PURPOSE

"The purpose of this site (<http://pdonaghy.blogspot.com/>) is **to help promote the use of free and open source resources** and to share my discoveries with as many people as possible" - [Patricia Donaghy](#)



This very useful blog started recently on the 4th of January, 2008 (based on the first post). Although, this blog is kind of new, you can already find more than three dozen free learning tools to explore. Even more important, resources are continually being added to the site. At least one per day for every day of the year! In other words, by the end of 2008, we can expect to find more than 360 free tools shared and organized in this useful database blog (refer to the Labels!).

In addition, I like this blog's approach and design, whereby you have a bit of visual stimulation (screenshot or logo of the tool), a super brief summary (one paragraph!) , and of course a link to get you to the free tool. In addition, one question is asked for every tool, which anyone can comment: **What do you think of \_\_\_\_\_?** I think the idea behind your blog is great :)

Actually, this new database blog reminds me a bit of [Jane's E-Learning Pick of the Day](#) blog, which then stocks up the discovered tools in an amazing [Directory of Learning Tools](#) (including about 1,500 free ones!). Though, while Jane focuses on both commercial and free tools, Patricia



focuses exclusively on free software and resources (So, no false hope!). So, if you ask me, I would recommend using both these '[Toolicious](#)' sites to explore and discover new free learning tools and resources. By doing so, I am pretty sure we will not miss out on all the juicy free learning tools available to us today.

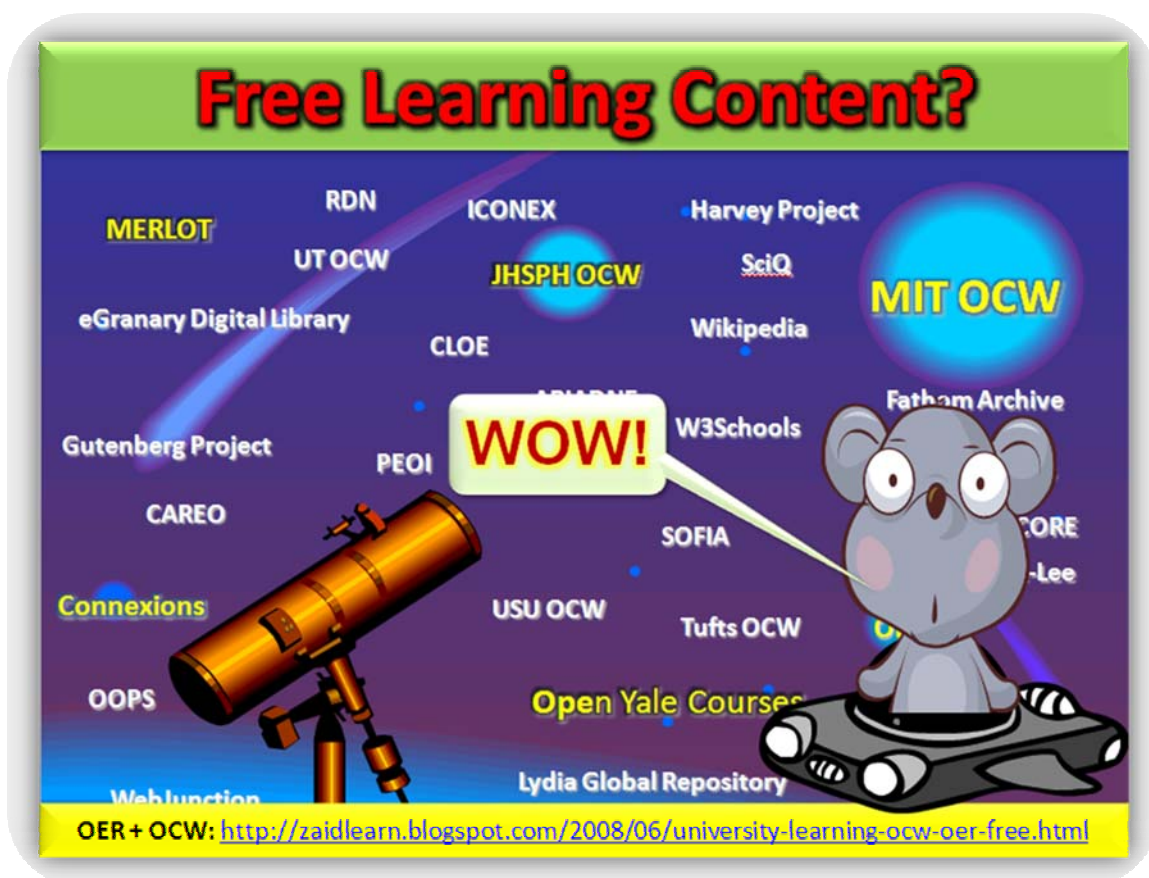
In addition, Patricia is also creating an [International Edubloggers Directory](#) (Check it out!). Finally, she already has a wonderful [Using ICT in Further Education](#) blog, which discusses free resources (including some of the interesting tools posted in her 'Database' blog), but also adds tips particularly relevant to education (value added!).

Now that Patricia has 3 blogs (and perhaps others?) to multi-task and maintain, I suppose she will be very busy in the coming days, weeks, months, etc. But then again, embarking on these noble initiatives should provide the sparks, energy and motivation to succeed. Patricia, you certainly have my vote of support (Obama, sorry!) :)

“I like a teacher who gives you  
something to take home to think about  
besides homework.”

-Lily Tomlin as "Edith Ann"

## GALAXY 5: FREE LEARNING CONTENT





## 52. UNIVERSITY LEARNING = OCW + OER = FREE!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/06/university-learning-ocw-oer-free.html>

ZaidLearn is back from another non-blogging vacation (Who cares!)? Excellent point! Anyway, before I get back to my wacky [5-part learning series](#) (in 2 weeks time!), I need to settle something urgently, and that is to compile and organize all my University learning related [OpenCourseWare](#) (OCW) and [Open Educational Resources](#) (OER) links that are scattered here and there, into **ONE SMASHING POST**. In short, this post is about smashing all free University learning related OCW and OER resources and collections discovered into an all-in-one (sounds like shampoo!) quick-to-access/find juicy compilation. Hopefully, it will satisfy my thirst for quick access to free University learning related content.

Interestingly, this post will be a dynamic one, meaning that I will continue to update (and revamp!) it as I discover, or others share ideas and recommend new oceans of free knowledge.

### STARTING POINTS

But before we get bogged down by tons of free learning repositories, here are few good starting points to find and know more about OER and OCW:

#### SEARCH

##### ❑ [OCW/OER Search](#)

This Google custom search engine enables you to search the sites that are linked from this post (with a few filters, too). [Click here](#) to view Tony Hirst's (Credit to him for the super idea!) OER/OCW search version, which also searches sites linked on this post. [Click here](#) to view Scott Leslie's upgraded version, which brings it to a Do-It-Together level by using a Wiki enabling anyone to add OER/OCW links (URLs).

##### ❑ [OpenCourseWare Finder](#)

The OCW Finder currently shows results from several collections, including MIT OCW , Utah State University, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health OCW, Tufts University OCW, Foothill De-Anza SOFIA, and Carnegie Mellon Open Learning Initiative.

##### ❑ [OER Recommender](#)

Makes it easy for open education resource providers to provide links to related resources. A good starting point to search and find relevant OER resources.



## DIRECTORIES

### ❑ [OER Commons](#)

A global teaching and learning network of free-to-use resources – from K-12 lesson plans to college courseware – for you to use, tag, rate, and review.

### ❑ [Open Courseware Directory](#)

You will find 7 groups of subject-specific open courseware, including specialized resources for each subject. It is an annotated listing of publicly available courseware (lecture notes, handouts, slides, tutorial material, exam questions, quizzes, videos, demonstrations, etc) from the world's universities, colleges and other educational institutions.

### ❑ [OpenCourseWare Consortium](#)

The OpenCourseWare Consortium is a collaboration of more than 200 higher education institutions and associated organizations from around the world creating a broad and deep body of open educational content using a shared model.

## COMMUNITIES

### ❑ [WikiEducator](#)

An evolving community intended for the collaborative planning of education projects linked with the development of OER. development of free content on Wikieducator for e-learning; work on building open education resources (OERs) on how to create OERs.

### ❑ [Wikiversity](#)

Wikibooks, Collection of open-content textbooks. Wikiversity is intended for the creation and use of free learning materials and activities.

### ❑ [UNESCO OER Community](#)

This site was originally created by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) as a place where members of the UNESCO OER Community can work together on questions, issues and documents. There are some wonderful resources here providing you with relevant information needed to understand what OER is about, how to use/contribute/collaborate, and how to move forward (e.g. [OER: the Way Forward](#) , [OER stories](#), [OER presentations](#) and [UNESCO OER Toolkit](#))



## NEWS

### ☐ [OER Blogs](#)

An initiative from MIT's OpenCourseWare project to aggregate and stimulate discussion about open educational resources. It is a great resource to keep yourself updated about the latest trends and developments in OCW and OER.

### ☐ [Open Education News](#)

A number of individuals from the US, South Africa, and eventually other locations daily monitor the internet for news related to open education. It is essentially a group blog.

### ☐ [Open Education - Free Education For All](#)

This site led by Thomas J. Hanson is dedicated to tracking the changes occurring in education today.

### ☐ [EduResources Weblog](#)

This weblog by Joseph Hart focuses on locating, evaluating, discussing, and providing guidelines to instructional resources for faculty and students in higher education (HE). The emphasis is on free, shared, HE resources.

## AMAZING COLLECTIONS!

Why start bookmarking free learning content out there from scratch, when there are great people out there that have already assembled amazing OCW collections for us to explore (for free!). Here are a few amazing OCW collections shared by special people out there:

- ☐ [Lecturefox - Free University Lectures \(Andreas and Ellen Petersen\)](#)
- ☐ [Free Online Courses from Great Universities \(Open Culture\)](#)
- ☐ [Intelligent YouTube Video Collections \(Open Culture\)](#)
- ☐ [30+ List of Computer Science Video Lectures \(Over 200 Videos\)](#)
- ☐ [200 Free Online Classes to Learn Anything \(Jessica Hupp\)](#)
- ☐ [More than 100 Free Places to Learn Online - and Counting \(Jeff Cobb\)](#)
- ☐ [OER - Open Educational Resources \(Jeff Cobb\)](#)
- ☐ [100+ Open Courseware Collections for Aspiring Web Developers \(Laura Milligan\)](#)
- ☐ [100 Free Podcasts from the Best Colleges in the World \(Heather Johnson\)](#)
- ☐ [60+ Killer Open Courseware Collections for Web Designers \(Jessica Hupp\)](#)
- ☐ [Top 100 Open Courseware Projects \(OEDb\)](#)
- ☐ [250+ Killer Digital Libraries and Archives \(OEDb\)](#)





- ❑ [100+ Sources for Free Books & Texts Online \(Alisa Miller\)](#)
- ❑ [The Stingy Scholar's OCW Collection](#)
- ❑ [Online Neuroscience Lectures](#)

## UNIVERSITY LEARNING & OCW

The OCW or University related learning content compilation below is organized according to Country, University and my urge to quick access. Not much metadata here about each University or repository, except quick access to the juicy links. Hopefully, it makes **'REPOSITORY FINDING SENSE'** to you. This compilation was influenced by [this great list!](#) Yes, some parts were even copy/paste! :)

## UNITED STATES

- ❑ **MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT)**
  - [MIT OCW](#)
  - [MIT OCW - Audio/Video Courses](#)
  - [MIT OCW - YouTube](#)
  - [MIT World](#)
  - [MIT TechTV](#)
- ❑ **HARVARD UNIVERSITY**
  - [Harvard Business Online](#) (Podcasts)
  - [Harvard - Homeric Odyssey..Justice](#) (Podcasts)
  - [Harvard - Kennedy School of Gov](#) (Podcasts)
  - [Harvard Law School](#) (Podcasts)
  - [Classics Podcasts \(Harvard\)](#)
  - [BerkmanCenter's Channel \(Harvard Law School\)](#) (YouTube)
  - [BokTube - BokCenter's YouTube Channel \(Harvard\)](#) (YouTube)
- ❑ **BERKELEY**
  - [UC Irvine](#) (OCW)
  - [University of California, Berkeley](#) (Podcasts)
  - [Berkeley on iTunes](#) (Podcasts)
  - [University of California \(Berkeley\)](#) (YouTube)
  - [University of California Television \(UCTV\)](#) (YouTube)



- [Berkeley YouTube Lectures](#)
- [U California eScholarship Repository](#)
- [CalTech Today](#) (Podcasts)
- [Berkeley Multimedia Research Center](#) (Podcasts)
- [Berkeley Resources](#) (Podcasts)

#### ❑ PRINCETON

- [UChannel \(Princeton\)](#) (YouTube)
- [Princeton U's Event SM](#) (Podcasts)
- [Princeton U's New Media Center](#) (Podcasts)
- [Princeton University Channel](#) (Podcasts)
- [Princeton University WebMedia](#) (Podcasts)

#### ❑ STANFORD UNIVERSITY

- [Stanford on iTunes](#) (Podcasts)
- [Stanford University \(Edu. Corner\)](#) (Podcasts)
- [Stanford University Audio/Video](#) (Podcasts)
- [Stanford on YouTube](#)
- [Stanford Center for Professional Development Free Engineering Seminars](#)

#### ❑ YALE UNIVERSITY

- [Open Yale Courses](#) (OCW)
- [Yale University](#) (Podcasts)

#### ❑ JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

- [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#) (OCW)
- [Johns Hopkins U](#) (Podcasts)

#### ❑ RICE UNIVERSITY

- [Connexions](#) (OCW)
- [Rice University](#) (Podcasts)

#### ❑ CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

- [Open Learning Initiative](#) (OCW)
- [Carnegie Mellon](#) (YouTube)



**OTHER OCW:**

- ☐ [Tufts University](#)
- ☐ [UMass Boston](#)
- ☐ [University of Notre Dame](#)
- ☐ [Utah OpenCourseWare Alliance](#)
- ☐ [Utah State University](#)
- ☐ [SOFIA Project](#)

**OTHER YOUTUBE CHANNELS:**

- ☐ [University of Southern California \(USC\)](#)
- ☐ [University of North Carolina \(UNC\) at Chapel Hill](#)
- ☐ [Vanderbilt University](#)
- ☐ [University of Chicago Press](#)
- ☐ [University of Arizona](#)
- ☐ [Tulane University](#)
- ☐ [Purdue University](#)
- ☐ [Old Dominion \(US\)](#)
- ☐ [Duke University News](#)
- ☐ [AuburnUniversity's Videos](#)

**OTHER PODCAST LIBRARIES:**

- ☐ [Knowledge Wharton](#)
- ☐ [Chicago University GSB](#)
- ☐ [Alleghany College](#)
- ☐ [American University \(Law\)](#)
- ☐ [Arizona State University](#)
- ☐ [Boston College \(Front Row\)](#)
- ☐ [Buffalo State College](#)
- ☐ [Butte College](#)
- ☐ [Carleton University Television](#)
- ☐ [Case School of Law](#)
- ☐ [Center for Int. Studies \(Chicago\)](#)
- ☐ [College of DuPage](#)
- ☐ [Dartmouth Chance](#)



- ☐ [Drexel University](#)
- ☐ [Duke University Multimedia](#)
- ☐ [Georgetown University Forum](#)
- ☐ [Georgetown University Webcasts](#)
- ☐ [Georgia College & State U](#)
- ☐ [Kansas State University \(Landon\)](#)
- ☐ [Lewis & Clark Law School](#)
- ☐ [Mathematical Sc. Res. Inst.](#)
- ☐ [Montclair State University](#)
- ☐ [Perdue Boilercast](#)
- ☐ [Rockefeller University](#)
- ☐ [Southwest Tech's CourseCasts](#)
- ☐ [St. Edward's University](#)
- ☐ [Swarthmore College U Lectures](#)
- ☐ [UCLA Bruincast](#)
- ☐ [UCLA Webcasts](#)
- ☐ [University of Arizona College of Law](#)
- ☐ [University of British Columbia](#)
- ☐ [University of California TV](#)
- ☐ [University of Connecticut](#)
- ☐ [University of New South Wales](#)
- ☐ [University of Oregon](#)
- ☐ [University of Southern California](#)
- ☐ [University of Texas](#)
- ☐ [University of Virginia](#)
- ☐ [University of Warwick](#)
- ☐ [University of Washington TV](#)
- ☐ [University of Wisconsin-Madison](#)
- ☐ [Vanderbilt University](#)
- ☐ [Weber University](#)
- ☐ [Western Kentucky University](#)
- ☐ [York College Lectures](#)



## EUROPE

### UNITED KINGDOM

- ☐ [The Open University](#)
- ☐ [Humbul Humanities Hub \(Oxford\)](#)
- ☐ [Cambridge University](#) (Podcasts)
- ☐ [London School of Economics](#) (Podcasts)
- ☐ [University of Nottingham](#) (Podcasts)
- ☐ [Oxford Internet University](#) (Podcasts)
- ☐ [University of Bath](#) (Podcasts)
- ☐ [Times-Online MBA Broadcasts](#) (Podcasts)
- ☐ [Oxford University Saïd Business School](#) (YouTube)

### FRANCE

- ☐ [ParisTech "Graduate School"](#) (11 universities - French)
- ☐ [Grenoble Ecole de Management](#) (French)
- ☐ [UniversitySurf](#) (French)
- ☐ [Insead Podcasts](#)

### HOLLAND

- ☐ [Delft University of Technology \(TU Delft\)](#) (English)
- ☐ [Open Universiteit Nederland](#) (Dutch)

### SPAIN

- ☐ [OpenCourseWare Universia](#) (10 universities - Spanish, Catalan, Galician)

### SWITZERLAND

- ☐ [European Graduate School \(EGS\)](#) (YouTube)

## ASIA

### AUSTRALIA

- ☐ [University of Southern Queensland](#)



## NEW ZEALAND

- ☐ [New Zealand Open Educational Resources Project](#)

## JAPAN

- ☐ [United Nations University](#)
- ☐ [Japan OCW Consortium](#)
- ☐ [Doshisha University](#)
- ☐ [Hokkaido University](#)
- ☐ [Kagawa Nutrition University](#)
- ☐ [Kansai University](#)
- ☐ [Keio University](#)
- ☐ [Kyoto University](#)
- ☐ [Kyoto Seika University](#)
- ☐ [Kyushu University](#)
- ☐ [Meiji University](#)
- ☐ [Nagoya University](#)
- ☐ [Osaka University](#)
- ☐ [Ritsumeikan University](#)
- ☐ [Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University](#)
- ☐ [Tokyo Institute of Technology](#)
- ☐ [University of Tokyo](#)
- ☐ [University of Tsukuba](#)
- ☐ [Waseda University](#)

## INDIA

- ☐ [Indian Institute of Technology/Indian Institute of Science](#) (YouTube)
- ☐ [Rai OpenCourseware](#)

## KOREA

- ☐ [Korea University](#)
- ☐ [Kyung Hee University](#)

## TAIWAN

- ☐ [National Chiao Tung University](#) (Chinese)



## VIETNAM

- ☐ [EduNet OpenCourseWare](#)
- ☐ [Fulbright Economics Teaching Program OCW](#)

## HONG KONG

- ☐ [LEARNet - Shareable Learning Resources in Hong Kong](#)

## SOUTH-AMERICA

### MEXICO

- ☐ [Tecnológico de Monterrey](#) (Spanish)
- ☐ [Universidad de Monterrey](#) (Spanish)

## TRANSLATION AFFILIATES

- ☐ [China Open Resources for Education](#) (Simplified Chinese)
- ☐ [Chulalongkorn University](#) (Thai)
- ☐ [Opensource Opencourseware Prototype System](#) (Traditional Chinese)
- ☐ [Universia](#) (Portuguese)
- ☐ [Universia](#) (Spanish)

## OTHERS

- ☐ [Novell OpenCourseWare](#)

Novell OpenCourseWare is a collection of educational materials developed by Novell Training Services for authorized courses and other customer training purposes.

## OER/FREE REPOSITORIES

Below is a list of OER/FREE learning repositories that are not directly linked with any particular university, but are still wonderful repositories or collections of free content that we can in some way or the other use for our courses:





## GENERAL

- ❑ [Wikipedia](#)  
Wikipedia is an amazing encyclopedia (of anything you can think of!) written collaboratively by many of its readers.
- ❑ [MERLOT](#)  
Find peer reviewed online teaching and learning materials.
- ❑ [Wikinews](#)  
Free-content online news source where any site visitor can add or edit stories.
- ❑ [Answers.com](#)  
Answers.com offers free access to millions of topics from the world's leading publishers.
- ❑ [Internet Archive](#)  
The Internet Archive is building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form.
- ❑ [Fathom Archive](#)  
Offers access to the complete range of free content developed for Fathom by its member institutions including lectures, articles, interviews, exhibits and free seminars.
- ❑ [GLOBE](#)  
The Global Learning Objects Brokered Exchange (GLOBE) is an international consortium that strives to make shared online learning resources available to educators and students around the world.
- ❑ [dgCommunities](#)  
dgCommunities (Provided by Development Gateway Foundation) is a collaborative space for professionals working to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development worldwide (Members in more than 200 countries).
- ❑ [HowStuffWorks](#)  
HowStuffWorks explains hundreds of subjects, from car engines to lock-picking to ESP, using clear language and tons of illustrations.
- ❑ [World Lecture Hall](#)  
An entry point to free online course materials from around the world.
- ❑ [OpenDOAR](#)  
Is an authoritative directory of academic open access repositories. Each OpenDOAR repository has been visited by project staff to check the information that is recorded here.
- ❑ [AT&T Knowledge Network Explorer - Blue Web'n Homepage](#)



Blue Web'n is a huge online library categorized by subject, grade level, and format (tools, references, lessons, hotlists, resources, tutorials, activities, projects). The content categories available are: arts, business, education, English, foreign languages, health, history and social studies, maths, science, technology among others.

- ❑ [Monterey Institute for Technology and Education National Repository of Online Courses \(NROC\)](#)

A growing library of high-quality online courses for students and faculty in higher education, high school and Advanced Placement. Courses in the NROC library are contributed by developers from leading online-learning programs across the US.

- ❑ [Apple Learning Interchange](#)

Is a social network for educators, where you can find content ranging from simple lesson ideas to in-depth curriculum units for K-12 and Higher Education.

- ❑ [ARIADNE](#)

The core of the ARIADNE infrastructure is a distributed network of learning repositories.

- ❑ [CAREO](#)

The Campus Alberta Repository of Educational Objects (CAREO) project aims to create both an online repository of educational objects for post-secondary educators and a community that both creates and supports those objects.

- ❑ [Intute](#)

A free online service providing you with access to Web resources for education and research. Areas: Science and Technology, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Health and Life, and Sciences.

- ❑ [Ideas](#)

An initiative by the University of Wisconsin to identify, evaluate, catalog, and align to the Wisconsin education standards resources that are already on the Internet, such as lesson plans and reference materials.

- ❑ [JORUM](#)

Jorum is a free online repository service for teaching and support staff in UK Further and Higher Education Institutions, helping to build a community for the sharing, reuse and repurposing of learning and teaching materials.

- ❑ [LeMill - Learning Mill](#)

Web community for finding, authoring and sharing learning resources.

- ❑ [Curriki \(K-12\)](#)

Internet site for Open Source Curriculum (OSC), which will provide universal access to free curricula and instructional materials for grades K-12.



❑ [DAREnet](#)

DAREnet is a search service which gives free access to academic research output in the Netherlands. DAREnet consists of more than 146.000 digital objects.

❑ [EdNA Online \(Aus\)](#)

Education Network Australia (edna) is Australia's leading online resource collection and collaborative network for the education and training community.

❑ [EducaNext](#)

EducaNext is a service supporting the creation and sharing of knowledge for Higher Education.

❑ [Eureka](#)

A collective catalog of teaching and learning resources gathered by various organizations involved in the production of ITC educational resources.

❑ [ALISON \(Workplace Skills\)](#)

Including Touch Typing Skills, European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), British Computer Society (BCS) Unit E, Financial Literacy and e-Citizen.

❑ [HippoCampus \(High School\)](#)

Multimedia and course materials that can help students with their homework and studies.

❑ [Maricopa Learning eXchange](#)

Is an electronic warehouse of ideas, examples, and resources (represented as "packages") that support student learning at the Maricopa Community Colleges.

❑ [PEOI](#)

Professional Educational Organization International (PEOI) was created, and is run by volunteers who believe that it is time for open post secondary education be made available to all free of charge.

❑ [WannaLearn.com](#)

Here you can find over 350 categories of free, first-rate, family-safe online tutorials, guides and instructionally oriented Websites.

❑ [LoLa Exchange](#)

LoLa is an exchange for facilitating the sharing of high-quality learning objects. It contains materials for use across the curriculum, with a particular focus on modules for Information Literacy.



## EDUCATION

- ❑ [TeacherTube](#)  
Online community for sharing instructional videos.
- ❑ [T4 Tips Podcasts](#)  
Audio and video educational technology podcasts providing you tips, guidance and ideas on how to use different learning tools to facilitate effective learning.
- ❑ [GEM \(Gateway to 21st Century Skills\)](#)  
Thousands of free lesson plans and other teaching and learning resources.
- ❑ [SuTree \(Educational Videos\)](#)  
SuTree is a knowledge community and an aggregator of instructional & educational videos.
- ❑ [EdTechTalk](#)  
A community of educators interested in discussing and learning about the uses of educational technology. They webcast several live shows each week.

## SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

- ❑ [VideoLectures.Net](#)  
Free access to high-quality scientific video lectures.
- ❑ [Computer Science Teaching Center](#)  
A digital archive of peer reviewed resources for teaching computer science. Submission restricted to registered users.
- ❑ [CITIDEL](#)  
Computing and IT Interactive Digital Educational Library Repository (CITIDEL) is a great resource to discover computer Science education and research materials.
- ❑ [e-LEE \(Electrical Engineering\)](#)  
e-Learning tools for Electrical Engineering.
- ❑ [Exploratories](#)  
A project of Brown University's Computer Graphics Research Group to create a set of exemplary Web-based learning objects (Java applets) that teach concepts in introductory computer graphics at the college and graduate level. Users can download complete Java applets, or build their own from the components collection.
- ❑ [EEVL \(Engineering, Maths & Comp.\)](#)  
A guide to engineering, mathematics and computing information on the internet.



❑ [iLumina](#)

iLumina is a digital library of sharable undergraduate teaching materials for chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics, and computer science.

❑ [SMETE Digital Library](#)

Here you can access a wealth of teaching and learning materials as well as join this expanding community of science, math, engineering and technology explorers of all ages.

❑ [arXiv.org e-Print archive](#)

arXiv, set up by Cornell University, is an e-Print archive specializing in Physics, Mathematics, Nonlinear Sciences, Computer Science and Quantitative Biology.

❑ [HEAL \(Health Education Assets Library\)](#)

HEAL's mission is to provide free digital resources of the highest quality that meet the needs of today's health sciences educators.

❑ [College of Health Professions \(COHP\) Online Learning Resources](#)

Including Dental Hygiene, Health Science, Communicative Sciences & Disorders Medical Technology, Nursing Radiologic Sciences, Respiratory Therapy and Physical Therapy.

## HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

❑ [The Digital Scriptorium](#)

Is an image database of medieval and renaissance manuscripts that unites scattered resources from many institutions into an international tool for teaching and scholarly research.

❑ [John Locker - Free Documentaries](#)

Educate yourself with free documentaries online on History, Science, Music, War, Religions, Politics, Conspiracies, and more!

## MATHEMATICS

❑ [The Math Forum \(Drexel University\)](#)

Is the leading online resource for improving math learning, teaching, and communication since 1992, created by teachers, mathematicians, researchers, students, and parents. It offers a wealth of problems and puzzles, online mentoring, research, team problem solving, collaborations and professional development.



❑ [Math World](#)

A mathematical specific repository, created by Wolfram Research. Contains web based (HTML) resources about algebra, applied mathematics, calculus and analysis, discrete mathematics, geometry, history, number theory, probability, statistics and topology, etc.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

❑ [Eduforge](#)

Eduforge is an open access environment designed for the sharing of ideas, research outcomes, open content and open source software for education.

❑ [W3Schools](#)

At W3Schools you will find all the Web-building tutorials you need, from basic HTML and XHTML to advanced XML, SQL, Database, Multimedia and WAP.

❑ [Edumax](#)

Edumax is an online learning website that provides free lessons on topics from personal development to computer programming.

## TEXTBOOKS

❑ [Google Book Search](#)

In addition to searching, viewing and downloading books, you also receive links to reviews, references, and even a world map showing every location mentioned in the book.

❑ [Gutenberg Project](#)

Project Gutenberg is the first and largest single collection of free electronic books, or eBooks.

❑ [Scribd](#)

Research, ebooks, poetry, presentations, schoolwork, and more are all available on this site.

❑ [LearnOutLoud.com](#)

Browse over 15,000 educational audio books, MP3 downloads, podcasts, and videos.

❑ [Librivox](#)

LibriVox volunteers record chapters of books in the public domain and release the audio



files back onto the net. Their goal is to make all public domain (under U.S. right) books available as free audio books. It is a volunteer, open source, free content, public domain project.

❑ [Global Text Project](#)

The project will create open content electronic textbooks that will be freely available from a Web site.

❑ [Textbook Revolution](#)

All of the books are offered for free by their respective copyright holders for online viewing. The categories of the textbooks are: Biology, Business & Management, Chemistry, Computers-Tech, Earth Sciences, Economics, Engineering, Health Sciences & Medical, History, Math and Physics.

❑ [The Oxford Text Archive](#)

It collects, catalogues, preserves and distributes high-quality digital resources for research and teaching. They are currently holding thousands of texts in more than 25 different languages, and are actively working to extend their catalogue of holdings.

❑ [freetechbooks.com](#)

This site offers free books, text books, and lecture notes for computer science, engineering, and computer programming students and professionals.

❑ [Free Online Programming Books](#)

A list of 300+ free programming books available on the Internet.

❑ [Great Books Index](#)

Browse by author or title to find text for several books from the Encyclopedia Britannica's Great Books of the Western World.

❑ [CIA World Factbook](#)

Current, in-depth data on every country in the world.

## DIGITAL LIBRARIES

❑ [World Digital Library](#)

Will make available on the Internet, free of charge and in multilingual format, significant primary materials from cultures around the world, including manuscripts, maps, rare books, musical scores, recordings, films, prints, photographs, architectural drawings, and other significant cultural materials.





❑ [ERIC](#)

The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) provides free access to more than 1.2 million bibliographic records of journal articles and other education-related materials and, if available, includes links to full text.

❑ [OAISTER](#)

OAlster is a union catalog for a wide range of digital resources. They provide access to these digital resources by "harvesting" their descriptive metadata (records) using OAI-PMH (the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting).

❑ [Columbia University Libraries Digital Collections](#)

Find more than 10 different digital collections that range from medieval and early Renaissance manuscripts to architectural drawings or visit the online exhibitions for even more.

❑ [Library of Congress Digital Collections \(US\)](#)

It is considered the largest library in the world, with millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts in its collections.

❑ [Universal Digital Library](#)

Their goal is to preserve every printed book digitally in this resource. The library currently holds one million books in its collection.

❑ [NEEDS Digital Library](#)

A digital library with links to online learning materials in engineering and related areas of science and math.

❑ [NSDL - The National Science Digital Library \(US\)](#)

The Nation's (US) online library for education and research in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics.

❑ [eGranary Digital Library](#)

Provides millions of digital educational resources to institutions lacking adequate Internet access.

## DIGITAL MEDIA

❑ [TED Talks](#)

Inspired talks by the world's greatest thinkers and doers.



❑ [Big Think](#)

A new and growing website, currently in its beta version, with a simple mission: to move the discussion away from talking heads and talking points, and give it back to you.

❑ [FORA.tv](#)

FORA.tv delivers discourse, discussions and debates on the world's most interesting political, social and cultural issues, and enables viewers to join the conversation.

❑ [WGBH \(Free Public Lectures\)](#)

Free live and on-demand lectures given by some of the world's foremost scholars, authors, artists, scientists, policy makers and community leaders.

❑ [Annenberg Media Resources](#)

Annenberg Media's multimedia resources help teachers increase their expertise in their fields and assist them in improving their teaching methods.

❑ [Flickr](#)

Flickr is photo distributed classification system. It is useful for managing and sharing photos over the Internet. If users want to use a photo of another photographer, if they have created an account they can contact each other through the Flickr intranet. Copyright issues are solved with Creative Commons Licenses. You can find millions of free images here, which we can use to spice up our learning content.

❑ [Education Podcast Network](#)

The Education Podcast Network is an effort to bring together into one place, the wide range of podcast programming that may be helpful to teachers looking for content to teach with and about, and to explore issues of teaching and learning in the 21st century.

❑ [Creative Commons](#)

Creative Commons provides free tools that let authors, scientists, artists, and educators easily mark their creative work with the freedoms they want it to carry. You can use CC to change your copyright terms from "All Rights Reserved" to "Some Rights Reserved."

## YOUTUBE CHANNELS

❑ [GoogleTalks](#)

Google events featuring everyone from newsmakers to bestselling authors (Joseph Stieglitz, Obama, Richard Florida, etc.).



❑ [Google Tech Talks](#)

There are a large number of technical talks at Google. Many of these are videotaped, and some are made available for external viewing right here.

❑ [The Nobel Prize](#)

It brings you fascinating insights into the minds of current and past Nobel Laureates.

❑ [TED Talks](#)

This is the YouTube version of TED Talks, which is a collection of inspired talks by the world's greatest thinkers and doers.

❑ [FORA.tv](#)

The YouTube version of FORA.tv, which delivers discourse, discussions and debates on the world's most interesting political, social and cultural issues, and enables viewers to join the conversation.

❑ [Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting](#)

Its mission is to promote in-depth coverage of international affairs, focusing on topics that have been under-reported, miss-reported - or not reported at all. The videos you see in this YouTube collection are one part of larger reporting projects from around the world.

❑ [BBC Worldwide](#)

The Best of British TV. Top Gear, Mighty Boosh, Doctor Who, Attenborough, Parkinson, Catherine Tate & the rest from BBC Worldwide!

❑ [National Geographic](#)

Inspiring People to Care About the Planet!

WOW! Where to start! Alright, I have to admit that this post is not a smashing one yet. Give me a few weeks of reflection, feedback and smashing, and hopefully the compilation will be a useful starting point and quick access to OER and OCW (Just keep in mind that OCW is OER, but OER is not necessarily OCW! Whatever!). I am beginning to sense OER/OCW information overload here. If I am not mistaken, it would take me approximately **754 YEARS TO DIGEST** all the resources currently linked here. However, ***if we connect, network, collaborate, learn and reflect together we might manage to digest (to innovate and improve) these free learning resources in less than 24 hours.*** Let's use our connective intelligence to educate the world about OER and OCW :)

Until we explore, we will never know! Have fun learning!



## 53. DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC OER COLLECTIONS (NUS)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/10/nuss-discipline-specific-oer.html>

### MISSION

*The **Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning (CDTL)** seeks to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at National University of Singapore (NUS), and aspires to establish itself as a leading centre in higher education. At the heart of their mission is the ongoing endeavor to trigger reflection on different conceptions of teaching and learning, their rationale, and the modes, strategies, and practices of teaching that are consistent with these conceptions.*



### JUICE

In [my previous post about NUS and CDTL](#) I focused on their great T&L publications. In addition to creating great T&L resources, they are also very actively learning from other learning institutions and educators (or anywhere!), and are collectively searching, finding and indexing useful T&L resources, including courseware (or OER) around the world. Interestingly, they invite the readers to participate (on every page!) in the growth of their website by contributing resources via e-mail. Currently, the publicly available T&L resources (or links) are divided into eight (8) major categories: [Discipline Specific Links](#), [Centres of Teaching & Learning](#), [Good Teaching](#), [Teaching Tips](#), [Perspectives of Teaching in HE](#), [Topics of Special Interest](#), [Teaching Resources Guides](#) and [Miscellaneous Useful Links](#).

However, for this post I want to turn my attention to the [Discipline Specific Links](#) category, which is especially juicy for anyone looking for resources within a specific discipline. Currently, you can find collections to the following disciplines (new ones surely to be added as they collectively learn!):

- ☐ [Biological Sciences](#)
- ☐ [Chemistry](#)
- ☐ [Computer Science](#)
- ☐ [Dentistry](#)

- ☐ [Economics](#)
- ☐ [Engineering](#)
- ☐ [Mathematics](#)
- ☐ [Medicine](#)
- ☐ [Physics](#)
- ☐ [Psychology](#)
- ☐ [Language & Literature](#)
- ☐ [Geography](#)
- ☐ [History](#)
- ☐ [Law](#)

Each discipline specific collection is further divided into six sections: **Courseware & Tutorials**, *Databases & Data Banks*, *Online Journals & Publications*, *Societies & Associations*, *Newsgroups & Mailing Lists* and *Miscellaneous Resources*. The Courseware & Tutorials (or OER) section for each discipline are simply delicious. If you find time to explore these discipline specific courseware collections (links), you might discover some excellent world-class free resources (or OER) to beef up your course materials (Extra spice!).

## REFLECTION

Alright, NUS are not using any sophisticated resource repository engine, and there is no search feature (specifically for resources). But then again, they have *managed to index an amazing amount of quality T&L resources and courseware*, which are reasonably easy to find due to their simple-to-understand indexing approach. Though, it would be great if there was a search feature and... Hmm, I got an idea!



## IDEA!

[Joseph Hart reflected in his super blog](#) that [Berkeley's YouTube lectures](#) (If you explore the right column of this blog, you can find more Berkeley juice!) is a useful place for instructors who want to compare their course coverage to complete courses. In addition, I am pretty sure we would also love to compare our courses to courses from MIT, Harvard, London School of Economics, Oxford, Beijing University, Ecole Normale Supérieure, University of Melbourne, University of Tokyo, University of Hong Kong, University of Auckland, Seoul National University, and many more.



To be able to do this efficiently and effectively we would probably need a *simple, easy-to-use, intuitive and community-based **Online Course Comparison Tool (OCCT)**, which is continuously and dynamically updated* (ideally using some form of automated clustering feature like the one found in [Vivismo](#)). Believe it or not, I believe with a bit of creative thinking (and expertise!) we can actually transform (or fuse) and adapt EduTools's two excellent online comparison tools ([Course Management System](#) & [Online Course Evaluation Project](#)) to construct OCCT. If not, it would not need a miracle to create an OCCT, which will enable us to collectively compare (course-selection-of-choice!), discuss, reflect, review, evaluate, and rate/rank courses (e.g. resources, tools, coverage) from Universities and Colleges all over the world. Personally, I find all these world university ranking activities useful on the macro-level, but kind of misleading on the micro-level (course-level!). In other words, a world-class course could actually come from a pretty unknown University, which might be ignored due to our obsession with the macro-level stuff.

Finally, to get this OCCT project moving, we would probably need to set up a **DREAM TEAM**, which is *funded by Google* (Yeah, it would be great fun to work with some of their super-geek programmers to transform our ideas into reality!) Who should be in the team? Well, certainly you would want to include Stephen Downes and Joseph Hart to facilitate the system specs and architecture. In addition, the Dream Team would require expertise in many areas, and if you ask me I would include the following: Clayton Wright (Course Quality), Jane Knight (e-Learning Technology), Clive Shepherd (Instructional Design), Elliott Masie (Corporate Learning), Marc Prensky (Interactivity and Games), Robin Good (Collaborative Technology), Tom Kuhlmann (Graphic Design) and Rozhan M. Idrus (Technogogy). Should I be included? Probably, for facilitating this idea (unless someone else is already doing it!). Also, any DREAM TEAM would at least need one person to ask the so called 'stupid' questions and annoy members when they get sleepy (Devil's advocate!). I suppose I would be a good candidate here. Our first meeting would take place in Dubai sometime early 2008.

Hmm, well it is nice to dream and think-out-loud in this blog, but I do really hope to have my hands and mind on an OCCT sometime in the near future :)

## 54. TED TALKS (IDEAS WORTH SPREADING)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/08/ted-talks-ideas-worth-spreading.html>



*"**TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design)** is an invitation-only event where the world's leading thinkers and doers gather to find inspiration (<http://www.ted.com/>)."*

*"TED is an annual conference held in Monterey, California and recently, semi-annually in other cities around the world. TED describes itself as a "group of remarkable people that gather to exchange ideas of incalculable value". Its lectures cover a broad set of topics including **science, arts, politics, global issues, architecture, music** and more. The speakers themselves are from a wide variety of communities and disciplines. The TED Conference also has a companion conference, TED Global, held in varying locations...In 2005, the TED Prize was introduced. Three individuals are each given \$100,000 and granted a "**wish to change the world**" which they unveil at TED...The inaugural winners were Bono, Edward Burtynsky, and Robert Fischell. Bono's wish resulted in more than one million people signing up to join the **ONE Campaign to eradicate poverty**... Source: [Wikipedia](#)"*

The real beauty of TED Talks today, is that you and me can listen and watch these great thinkers and doers from our little (or big) computer devices and be inspired by their stories, and that there are people still all around the world trying to save it (or make a difference) whether small or big.

I have to admit that TED Talks over the last two years has been **my favorite video site**. Although, you can access all the TED talks on YouTube, you know when you visit TED Talks you are getting value for your time. The problem with YouTube, Yahoo Video, Google Video and the rest, is that there is so much junk and fun there, which will from my own experience often distract us from the real juice. You know Ali G is going to take up your time, while you should be watching a documentary about Muhammad Ali. Worse yet, you get stuck up watching a Norwegian young





dude eating chili and find that amusing (What's the big deal, we in South-East Asia eat chili 3-4 times a day!).

So, video sites like TED Talks are simply gems that we should dump in our favorites and continuously use to learn (Yes, we will also realize that we are not so great after all, and our macho egos will wake up to that reality!)

To get you started on the TED Talks learning journey, I will introduce you to a truly amazing and passionate professor from Sweden, the one and only **Hans Rosling**, who is a professor of global health at Sweden's Karolinska Institute. His current work focuses on dispelling common myths about the so-called developing world, which (he points out) is no longer worlds away from the west. Not only should you watch his inspiring talk (below), but also you should explore his yummy free learning tool [Gapminder](#) (which brings data to life).



Hans Rosling's 2006 TED Talk: <http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/view/id/92>  
Hans Rosling's 2007 TED Talk: <http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/view/id/140>

“Good teaching is one-fourth preparation  
and three-fourths theater.”

-Gail Godwin



## 55. KNOWLEDGE@WHARTON (INSTANT FAVOURITE!)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/knowledgewharton-instant-favourite.html>



### WHAT?

**Knowledge@Wharton** (<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/index.cfm>) is an online resource that offers the latest business insights, information, and research from a variety of sources. It is developed by the *University of Pennsylvania business school* along with corporate sponsors. Content is divided into 14 sections, covering areas ranging from Finance and Investment to Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Here you will find analysis of current business trends, interviews with industry leaders and Wharton faculty, articles based on the most recent business research, book reviews, conference and seminar reports and links to other websites.

### JUICE

Ironically, this amazing online resource has been an idle URL on my blog in the *Podcasts* section (right column somewhere!) ever since I began my learning adventure here (around 4



months ago!). I suppose sometimes we need to rediscover a resource from somewhere else, and embrace it before we truly value it. After reading [Wynn Williamson](#)'s reflection about this online resource, I explored it again and within minutes of exploration it become my instant favorite online business learning resource (for now! No science! Only Gut-feeling after few sips!). In other words, there is no point having a URL on your blog, if you don't (or someone) use it (Ouch!). Coming to think of it, the same applies often to knowledge, too. Hmm, let's focus on this resource and juice!

According to [Wynn Williamson](#), "...the website (this online resource!) falls somewhere in between a top-class economics newspaper such as [The Economist](#) and a university lecture forum like [Princeton WebMedia](#). For me, what sets Knowledge@ apart is the **professionalism** it brings to *open university discourse*. The articles deal with timely economic and financial issues while tying



the discussion to university research and academic theories. Meanwhile, the materials excel in accessibility - in addition to html pages, all pieces are downloadable as pdfs or mp3s. *And the posts are always trailed by many **smart comments**...* Knowledge@Wharton has made itself a stellar example of an open academic resource by modeling itself as a **topic business journal**, but free and made by academics."

Also, looking at the online visitor traffic, this site is already widely used around the world. Nearly 700,000 registered users (already signed-up, too!), 13,775,000 unique visitors per month, and an average visitor session length of 5 minutes and 15 seconds. Interestingly, 13.5% of the registered users are from the Asia/Pacific region [...more stats!](#)

**What about the learning juice?** Here are some of the juicy sections (14 all together!) that excite me:

- ☐ [Leadership and Change](#)
- ☐ [Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#)
- ☐ [Managing Technology](#)
- ☐ [Strategic Management](#)

That is too general, give me some individual articles/podcasts to get me going? Alright!



- ☐ [Google: In Search of Itself](#)
- ☐ [What Does It Take to Compete in a Flat World?](#)
- ☐ [Eyes on China: The Costs of Progress](#)

Remember, *only **registered users** can access articles older than 30 days!* If you ask me, I would love my courseware to look a bit like this juicy online resource (at least for qualitative subjects!). You don't need to give me a 30-40 page chapter/module (or 5-15 screens of chunked spoon-fed topics!), and then link me to resources, and expect me to have time (or motivation!) to explore further.

Ideally, I would prefer simply a **one-page topic** (why not a **one-page course?** Course plan?) telling me what it expects me to learn (synopsis, learning objectives/outcomes and related online/offline resources!), provides me with a bunch of relevant world class resources (URLs!), and empowers me to discover and learn on my own (or with my classmates, or connects me to



related experts and communities around the world!). Then we get together online/offline to discuss, reflect, construct new meanings, and nurture new ideas and knowledge out of these learning juices.

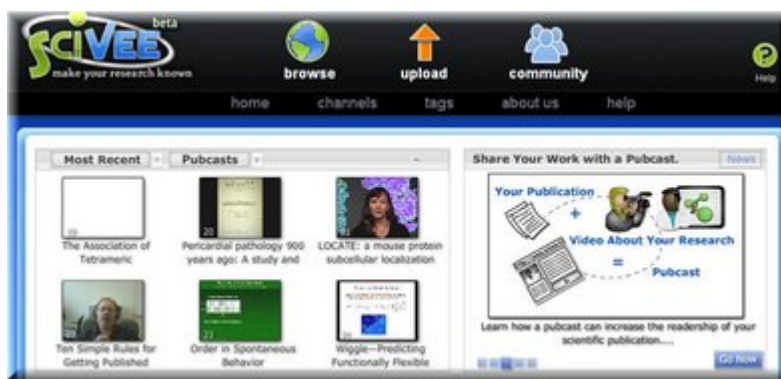
In short, I love Wharton's online journal, because it provides *substance quality* (to my humble understanding!), latest trends/news in different research/study areas, *simply interface design*, it is pleasing to the ear (podcasts! listen or download) and eyes (clipart and text/transcripts), links to related articles/resources, a discussion area (comment section) for each article, and finally it makes it easy for us to recommend or share their resources to others around the world (e.g. [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)).

I suppose if they add a **dynamic blog, forum**, and a **wiki** for each section (14!), it could actually become even a more dynamic learning resource (or courseware) that is more than sufficient for me (I personally don't need 3D virtual worlds to get engaged! Though, perhaps for dynamic demonstrations/illustrations/exercises/experiments it would be useful!). Well, I suppose we all have our own learning tastes, preferences, styles and dreams. However, I believe we all want content with substance quality from experts in their respective fields, and I suppose you might just find some of that here :)

**"You cannot teach a man anything; you  
can only help him find it within himself."  
-Galileo**

## 56. SCIVEE AND THE ORIGIN OF 'YES WE CAN!'

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/scivee-and-origin-of-yes-we-can.html>



### SCIVEE

SciVee (<http://www.scivee.tv/>) is an online science research sharing portal that invites scientists to make their research known by combining their published scientific article with a corresponding video into an online presentation called a “**SciVee pubcast**.”

### FEATURES & BENEFITS



"Pubcasts enable scientists who view them a **deeper comprehension** of a publication's teaching points than would be possible from reading an abstract alone. Scientists can gain a quicker comprehension of more publications in substantially less time with the aid of a video presentation



provided directly from the author. Once a large database of pubcasts is made available on SciVee, viewing multiple pubcasts on the same topic will enable scientists to gain access to a **broader sampling of relevant research** thereby possibly expanding their breadth and depth of their scientific understanding ([Source](#))."

According to SciVee, a pubcast of your research paper (peer reviewed scientific journal publication?) can increase the breadth of your audience, readership of your paper, feedback from peers, and possibly the likelihood of citation(s).

### EXAMPLE

Here is the cream example of success at SciVee: [Structural Evolution of the Protein-kinase Like Superfamily](#) was one of their first posts on July 19, 2007, and since then it has been viewed (or clicked on) more than 100,000 times.

### REFLECTION

According to YouTube viewing standards the cream example would probably be considered a disaster, but then again if say 5-10 of these viewers would actually cite the paper in theirs, it can be considered a great success from an academic research point-of-view.

Anyway, researchers should not be too concerned about the viewing numbers, popularity, ratings, and other ego-boosting activities. If the research can benefit mankind or nature in any way, we should have enough motivation to do our thing, and with tools like SciVee we can share, promote, discuss and reflect our research with the SciVee world. If we are lucky it will spark more interest here and there. You never know, someone like Bill Gates might be willing to sponsor millions of dollars if he believes in your work.

On the other side, I really found SciVee to be a really slow learning adventure! I am not sure if it has something to do with my PC and network, or with their server capacity and user traffic, or perhaps they are using some form of poor video compression technology. Whatever it is, it would probably be a good reason for why I will probably not access this site again (unless I discover a great SciVee research project searching in Google!). Perhaps, all the videos could be hosted on YouTube, and embedded in SciVee, so that SciVee could be lighter and easier to access for other important research activities such as discussion and reflection. Imagine exploring SciVee with a Google speed factor. Now that is something that gets me excited. In other words, SciVee

has interesting content and discussions, but it needs to speed up the access factor to have my vote of approval (Who cares about your vote!)! Just making a point!



### ORIGIN OF 'YES, WE CAN' ?

I am not sure if Bill Gates will invest millions of dollars in my important non-scientific "Origin of 'Yes, We Can!'" weekend project. I am in the midst of researching the origin of Obama's (or his team) inspirational and successful 'Yes, We can!' slogan and campaign (Example: ['Yes, We Can'](#) song). Ever since I heard Obama say those three famous words, I felt that I had heard it before somewhere. And this weekend I got the AHA-moment while listening (actually singing along! Great song!) to my 2 1/2 year old son singing the famous Bob the Builder song (or chorus), '**Bob the builder, Can we fix it? Bob the builder, Yes we can!**'

Could it be that Obama was inspired by Bob the Builder? If this is the case, he should give due credit to Bob the Builder for his contribution. If not, **shame on Obama!** Hmm, lets' give Obama the benefit of doubt for now. Perhaps, also 'Bob the Builder' is guilty of plagiarism. Therefore, I believe that this project is of great significance. Why? Because we need to know the truth and origin of this motivational and inspirational 'Yes, We Can!' phrase. It could be worth millions!

**Boss:** What nonsense! Get back to work! We don't pay you for researching such rubbish!

**Me:** Just trying to be creative and funny!

**Boss:** CREATIVE AND FUNNY!!!! Pay me your salary, and then you can be creative and funny!

**Me:** Oops, this post is getting me into trouble, so I better stop here :)



## 57. TV LESSON & SUTREE (EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS GALORE!)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/tv-lesson-sutree-educational-videos.html>



### TV LESSON

TV Lesson (<http://www.tvlesson.com/>) presents *one of the world's largest, most all-encompassing libraries of how-to content online*. Lesson content covers every conceivable topic and delivers the definitive online "**encyclopedia of lessons**" ([Source](#)). They also invite anyone to join and share their own wisdom and know-how by [uploading videos](#). You can also win prizes if you are really popular!

### SUTREE

[SuTree](#) (Sutra + Tree) is a knowledge *community and an aggregator of instructional & educational videos*. "It is a social bookmarking site that aims to be the "Digg" of e-learning. The site lets users bookmark and organize free video tutorials, video lessons, video how to and DIY from all over the web ([Source](#))."



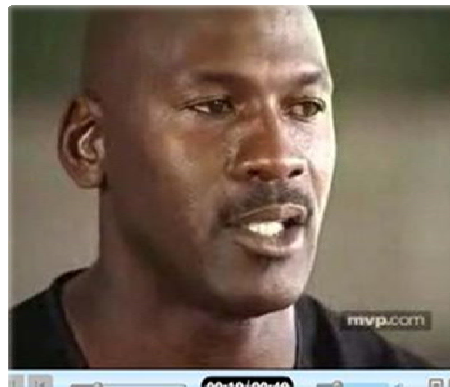
(**SuTree** = **Sutra** (from Sanskrit): (literally) a rope or thread that holds things together, or (metaphorically) a collection of knowledge in the form of a manual + **Tree**: Symbolizing the growth of knowledge.)

### JUICE

I discovered these two interesting educational video repositories snooping around [Jan Knight's 'Toolicious' blog](#). New video community or repository sites seem to be launched every day these days (hmm, perhaps not that extreme, but close!), so I suppose it is becoming a very competitive market to gain people's time (which leads to more advertising revenue!). I suppose, when you have so many of these free video or content sites already out there, you certainly need to find your own '[Blue Ocean' Strategy](#), or you can quickly become extinct (like the dinosaurs)! Whether

these two video community repositories are "**Juicylicious**" (or a disaster), or not? I suppose you got find that out for yourself (More fun that way!).

Interestingly, TV Lesson's currently most viewed video ([GMAT - Math](#)) has only been viewed 5575 times (Added on March 22nd, 2007). So, it has a long way to reach YouTube kind of viewing numbers. For example, [Evolution of Dance](#) video (No. 1) has more than 65 million views now! I did come across an interesting [short Michael Jordan video](#) (49 seconds only) in TV Lesson, which taught me some secrets about becoming a great jumper, leaper or dunker. GOD given ability and a lot of practice! In a nut shell, Michael Jordan (When he speaks about jumping you listen! Air Jordan!) says you need to jump (a lot!) and keep on trying to dunk (also, riding a bicycle helps!). It reminds me of how we often complicate education, when it is really quite simple. It lies in the word of what you want to teach/facilitate/coach/etc. Just add the word "*Practice*" to it (e.g. Writing = Practice Writing), or simply change the tense (Writing = Write, Write, Write, etc.). Not sure if I agree with that one! I agree with that!



As for [SuTree](#), I like the social-bookmarking and community dynamics of it. SuTree's growing community has managed to discover, organize and tag more than 10.800 educational videos, up until now. So, I am sure you will find some juice there, too (Wisdom of the Crowds!). According to the site's owners the goal is reaching around 20,000 lessons in the first year ([Source](#)).

Finally, SuTree or TV Lesson? Which one do I (or you) prefer? No idea! But based on slogan, SuTree wins hands down (My humble opinion!).

**SuTree - Knowledge Community: Watch. Learn. Share.**

TV Lesson - The World is Learning

Though, what is important (in terms of learning!), is that they both can add some form of value to our learning adventure. If not, we certainly have many more options (Hint - Look to the right!) :)



## 58. EDUMAX - LEARN NEW SKILLS FOR FREE!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/edumax-learn-new-skills-for-free.html>



START  
LEARNING **FREE!**

### WHAT?

Edumax (<http://www.edumax.com/home.html>) is an online learning website that provides *free lessons* on topics from personal development to computer programming.

### MASTERMIND

[Spark Publishing](#) (From Canada)

### JUICE

In short, here are all the free lessons (or 'virtual classrooms') currently found on Edumax:

- ❑ **Microsoft Office** - [Word](#), [Excel](#), [PowerPoint](#), [Outlook](#), [Access](#), [Visio](#)
- ❑ **Programming** - [Programming Basics](#), [Java](#), [Perl](#), [C#](#), [VB.NET](#), [ASP.NET](#)
- ❑ **Computer Basics** - [Building Your PC](#), [Computer Hardware](#), [Programming Basics](#), [MS Word](#), [MS Excel](#), [Photoshop](#)
- ❑ **Database Basics** - [Database Basics](#), [Microsoft SQL Server](#), [Oracle](#), [Microsoft Access](#)
- ❑ **Web Development** - [Web Development](#), [ASP.NET](#), [Java](#), [XML](#), [Perl](#), [Linux](#)
- ❑ **Internet Business** - [Opening an Online Store](#), [Ebay Basics](#)
- ❑ **Personal Development** - [Success](#), [Debt Management](#)



Interestingly, Edumax has ***carefully screened and selected all the contributing experts*** (or teachers) to ensure that the lessons are accurate. Basically, the online courses or lessons (of what I have explored) seem to be mostly chunked nicely (instructionally sound?), and follow the click-based (or hyperlink style) HTML type of courseware, which is mostly text-oriented with a few graphics here and there to illustrate and simplify. Actually, some might prefer a more fancy Flash-based type of courseware with a lot of animation and interactivity, but overall this type of learning resources can be very useful for hungry learners (especially, if you are struggling with a poor Internet connection!).

Though, I don't like the fact that you cannot download the lessons on your computer. Since the lessons are mostly text-based (with simple graphics), it would be nice (and useful) to be able to download them in PDF format (Flexibility!). However, Edumax like so many other free resource sites need to generate some revenue to survive, and until online advertising can be done offline (a new great invention is needed!), it is very unlikely the resources will be downloadable. Coming to think of it, why not make it downloadable (it will give this site an edge over others that don't!)? It will probably generate more traffic, too (leading to more advertising revenue). Finally, Edumax facilitates an online forum to support their learners who want to discuss the topics and even ask questions. Currently, there are no questions or topics in the forum, so I believe Edumax is a brand new site and hot out of the oven. Right?

## MORE JUICE

In general, if you are also looking for other alternatives to free tutorials to enhance your career skills (especially in IT), here are six super sites (in addition to Edumax!), which are great starting points:

- ❑ [W3Schools](#) (Web-building tutorials)
- ❑ [Wikivid](#) (Free Software Tutorials)
- ❑ [ALISON](#) (Free Interactive Workplace Skills Courseware)
- ❑ [Florida Gulf Coast University](#) (Technology Skills Orientation)
- ❑ [Sofia Courses](#) (e.g. Introduction to Java Programming)
- ❑ [Internet4Classrooms](#) (Technology Tutorials found on the Web. Index style!)

Now that online advertising is really kicking-off, we can expect many more wonderful free learning resource sites to pop-up in the near future. Great! We learners will be spoiled for choice, and being free will not be good enough (or a competitive advantage!). In addition to being free, **you must add value to the learner's learning experience** (if you want the learner to come back for more!). Now, what that value is, you need to ask each individual learner in a creative way (using all your senses). Yeah, you will also need some viral and disruptive marketing strategy.

What about Edumax? Edumax adds value to my learning experience :)



**"I am not a teacher, but an awakener."**

*- Robert Frost*



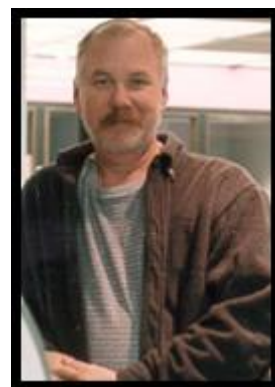
## 59. STUDY GUIDES & STRATEGIES TO THINK LIKE A GENIUS!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/08/study-guides-strategies-to-think-like.html>



### STUDY GUIDES & STRATEGIES

"The study guides and strategies (<http://www.studygs.net/>) web site is authored, maintained and supported by [Joe Landsberger](#) as an independent educational public service. Collaborative projects are developed across institutional, cultural and national boundaries. I **resist advertising, registration, and distracting graphics or features that may interfere with maximizing learner access.**"



### COPYRIGHT

"Permission is granted to freely copy, adapt, and distribute individual study guides in print format in non-commercial educational settings that benefit learners. No request to link to the web site is necessary. Please be aware that the guides welcome, and are under, continuous review and revision. For that reason, reproduction of all content on the internet can only be with permission through a licensed agreement [...more](#)"

### ANY JUICE

The first time you visit the 'Study Guides & Strategies' site, you might be thinking "Big deal! Just a lifeless text-based site with a lot of hyperlinks to whatever! I better get back to the real life in my 'Second Life'!" Wait a minute, give this site a minute or two and you will discover some amazing articles or tools that could assist you in becoming a more effective learner (Don't judge a book or site by its cover!). In 2006 alone, this amazing site had *11.8 million page views*. I wonder why? The best way to find out is to explore some of the wonderful study guides on this site covering topics such as learning (preparation), studying, classroom participation, learning with others, online learning and communicating, reading skills, preparing for tests, research, projects and much more.



This amazing collection of study guides are written using a simple and effective [design philosophy](#), which enables us easily to digest and learn (No unnecessary jargon and graphics! Also, the study guides are perfect for handouts, too!). On top of that, many of these study guides are translated into several languages (around 30), including Arabic, French, Indonesian, and Spanish (The different language translations (clickable icons) are displayed on the left side of the [index page](#)). Interestingly, now they have also added some easy-to-learn/use [exercises and games](#) (developed by students for students!), which are intended to reinforce or complement the selected Study Guides topics (I had fun trying the [speed reading game](#)!).

### THINKING LIKE A GENIUS!

*Are you getting excited?* If not, I will just have to share with you nine (9) quick tips from the site on how [to think like a genius](#):

1. Look at problems in many different ways, and find new perspectives that no one else has taken (or no one else has publicized!)
2. Visualize!
3. Produce! A distinguishing characteristic of genius is productivity.
4. Make novel combinations. Combine, and recombine, ideas, images, and thoughts into different combinations no matter how incongruent or unusual.
5. Form relationships; make connections between dissimilar subjects.
6. Think in opposites.
7. Think metaphorically.
8. Prepare yourself for chance.
9. ***the practice of genius***

If you are planning to develop a study guide for your students, you should perhaps consider using the 'Study Guides & Strategies' site as your main reference. Why reinvent the wheel (I mean Study Guides)?

Joe Landsberger (and his team) deserves a '*Honky Tonka Yamaguchi!*' thumbs up for this amazing project :)



## 60. PERSONAL LEARNING = YOUTUBE LECTURES + NO COURSES + FREE RICE

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/03/personal-learning-youtube-lectures-no.html>



### FREE RICE?

Did you know that you can give free rice to hungry people by simply playing a cool word game?

**FreeRice** (<http://www.freerice.com/>) has two goals:

- ☐ Provide English vocabulary to everyone for free.
- ☐ Help end world hunger by providing rice to hungry people for free (Made possible by the sponsors who advertise on the site).

While learning and stimulating your own brain, you are also helping hungry people! What a brilliant idea! Hopefully, it works!

### A WORLD WITHOUT COURSES

George Siemens provides us a glimpse into a potential future world without courses, in a mind stimulating [Articulate presentation](#).



"The function of education - in serving its stakeholders and in how it creates value - can be duplicated in a distributed manner. We're ***still missing the final piece of accreditation (though we're making progress on that) and we're missing the piece on how we will tie these pieces together.*** But, I imagine that will be on the horizon shortly (with tying together, I don't mean tying content together - we can do that with RSS, PageFlakes, etc. I mean a conceptual tying together so we can say, "yes, Susan has achieved those learning targets"). Treat it as a conversation starter, not a declaration of belief ..." ([Source](#))

It wasn't long ago when some learning experts were talking about a world without lectures (or even lecturers! Courseware + Artificial Intelligence = Learning). Today I watch more lectures than ever online (if I had more opportunities offline I would, too)! Whether online or offline, I simply love lectures, if they are interesting, engaging, useful, and relevant to my learning (E.g. [George Siemens Articulate presentation](#)). If you ask me to choose between a typical page-clicking courseware (eBook?) over watching a lecture, I would 99 out of 100 times choose a lecture (especially if it allows me to easily navigate and skip the boring/known parts). I suppose I prefer watching and listening to subject matter experts (if so!) reflecting-it-out-loud if possible (learning beyond the content)! But then again, everyone has their own preferences, which we should try to cater to one way or the other. If you can blend reading, listening, watching, presenting, sharing, playing, reflecting, individual/group activities, and creating new stuff into a course effectively, I will be inspired!

Although, I like learning whatever I want, anytime I want in an informal way, I do also like learning through courses. So, I hope and envision a world where both can co-exist effectively and that we can increasingly recognize and find ways to measure the value of informal learning (or no-course learning!) before making our judgments about a person's expertise (or competence level) in terms of knowledge, skills, experience and wisdom.

Coming to think of it, the problem might not lie with the 'course model', but how we define, deliver, assess and rigidly package courses (according to credit hours). With a bit of creativity, innovation and flexibility, we might be able to revive the true value of learning through courses! Also, wouldn't it be nice if we could have more flexibility in how we package our degrees (self-directed). We are free to choose courses according to our needs and interests (with prerequisite or warning signs if any!). In such a course learning world, I suppose Steve Jobs would have completed his degree!



## UNIVERSITY YOUTUBE COLLECTIONS

Dan Coleman shares on his super smart media blog [50+ Smart Video Collections on YouTube](#) (and growing!), which is simply an amazing collection. Although, YouTube unfortunately makes these collections difficult to find, Dan Coleman comes to the rescue!

Here are a few University YouTube Channels to keep you busy for life:

1. [University of California \(Berkeley\)](#)
2. [MIT \(Massachusetts Institute of Technology\)](#)
3. [University of Southern California \(USC\)](#)
4. [Indian Institute of Technology/Indian Institute of Science \(India\)](#)
5. [BerkmanCenter's Channel \(Harvard Law School\)](#)
6. [University of North Carolina \(UNC\) at Chapel Hill](#)
7. [Vanderbilt University](#)
8. [University of Chicago Press](#)
9. [University of California Television \(UCTV\)](#)
10. [University of Arizona](#)
11. [UChannel \(Princeton\)](#)
12. [Tulane University](#)
13. [Purdue University](#)
14. [Old Dominion \(US\)](#)
15. [Duke University News](#)
16. [European Graduate School \(EGS\)](#)
17. [AuburnUniversity's Videos](#)
18. [Oxford University Saïd Business School](#)
19. [BokTube - BokCenter's YouTube Channel \(Harvard\)](#)

## PERSONAL LEARNING

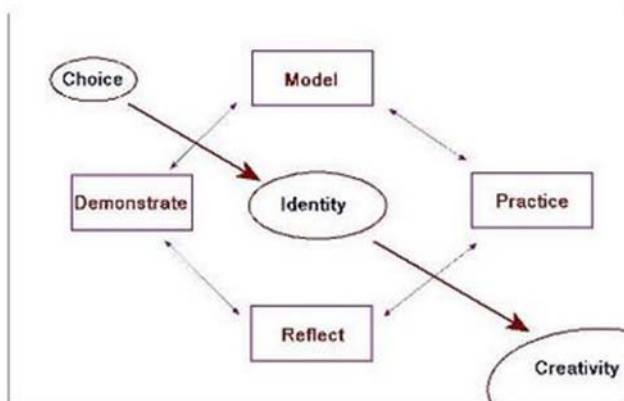
Stephen Downes is working on a new personal learning tool (soon to be launched, if I am not mistaken), and has some great ideas about what personal learning is all about.

**Personal learning** (in a nut shell!):

- To teach is to **MODEL** and to **DEMONSTRATE**
- To Learn is to **PRACTICE** and **REFLECT**

[CLICK HERE](#) to enjoy and reflect his slides :)

What is the PLE?



### WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

Besides learning, I don't have a clue! However, if you want to enjoy my learning as I discover new learning resources and tools, please take advantage and use my growing juicy [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) [collection](#). Currently, I am still trying to index my old super learning discoveries (No time!), and hopefully by early April, I will increasingly focus more on exploring new galaxies of resources and tools.

In the meantime, have fun feeding poor people while playing games, and please dream about a world without courses (and share your reflections with George Siemens). Also, have fun exploring 1000s of YouTube lectures! Hopefully, we can soon use Stephen Downes new personal learning tool to manage our learning more efficiently. We certainly need it now!

I suppose I will be back in a week or two with some more juicy updates from my learning adventures :)

**"If you think education is expensive, try  
ignorance."**

- Derek Bok

## 61. OPEN EDUCATION - FREE EDUCATION FOR ALL!

Article: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/open-education-free-education-for-all.html>



"OpenEducation.net (<http://openeducation.net/>) is a site dedicated to **tracking the changes occurring in education today**. In an era where it is possible to Photoshop images, Facebook people, and access an endless stream of knowledge by Googling, the Internet Age offers both great promise and enormous challenges for educators. At [OpenEducation.net](http://OpenEducation.net), readers will be exposed to both an objective and subjective look at the many issues facing the profession today ([Source](#))."

### EDITOR

The site editor **Thomas J. Hanson** (31 years in education), "relishes the opportunity to share his thoughts on the challenges facing educators and families in today's complex world. Tom's belief has always been that teaching is the second most difficult and the second most important job in the world, second only to the challenge and importance of being a parent. He publicly acknowledges his frustration regarding the lack of respect now accorded public school educators, noting that the expectations placed upon schools today are greater now than at any time in history yet the challenges facing children have never been more significant ([Source](#))."



### LEARNING JUICE

If you want to keep yourself updated on changes or issues occurring in education today (especially in North America) this is an excellent new learning avenue to explore (since June 1, 2007). Here, you can find articles or posts discussing distance learning, teaching and learning, open source software, OpenCourseWare, public policy, intellectual property and much more. The



articles (blog posts) published on this site are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/).

Personally, I like the fact that this site (or blog) is updated consistently and often, and the posts are original, stimulating, attractive (cool graphics!), useful and relevant. Here are three (3) articles to support my case:

- ❑ [Innovative Teaching - Chris Wilson Discusses the Comic Book Movement](#)
- ❑ [Athletics Do Offer Lessons that are Missing from the Classroom](#)
- ❑ [Education In the News - What's Worth Checking Out](#)

Thumbs up on the learning juice factor! Perhaps, they should make the archive a bit easier to access, enabling us easily to jump and scan through all the interesting articles published here. Anyway that is a small matter, which can easily be tweaked if wanted or needed.

Overall, I believe (I hope!) I have shared with you enough learning incentives to explore this excellent site further, which is free for all :)

"The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change."

- Carl Rogers



## 62. NEW ZEALAND OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) PROJECT

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/new-zealand-open-educational-resources.html>



### WHAT?

Funded by the Tertiary Education Commission, the objective of this OER project (<http://www.repository.ac.nz/>) is to develop courseware that will be *freely available* ([Creative Commons SA 2.5 license](#)) to all tertiary education institutions in New Zealand . All materials are being developed using a **modular approach** *to best enable customization, increase the potential for re-use, and lower the cost of maintenance* [...more](#)



### JUICE

First, if your country, or your company (or whoever!) is thinking about doing something similar, you can actually quite easily replicate their great initiative from a technology point-of-view. For the infrastructure to support the show-casing and disseminating (and developing) of course materials they are using the open source [Moodle](#) environment. When each course is completed, the source files are deposited into a repository system using the open source [Fedora](#) system ([The Full Story!](#) Read and Learn! I am!). Isn't that wonderful! You don't have to spend a fortune on the software at least.

However, the real juice (to me) from a learning-point-of-view, is of course our freedom to engage (or reuse/adapt/customize/Etc.) with all these wonderful free courseware. And I got to say that there are some really yummy ones already in the [showcase area](#) (Which I believe will experience the 'Big Bang' soon! This project is still in its infancy!):





- ☐ [Online Facilitation Course: eCapability Project](#)
- ☐ [Instructional Design for BlendEd learning: e-capability](#)
- ☐ [Introduction to Management](#)
- ☐ [Site feasibility](#)
- ☐ [Site Quality Assurance](#)

"Not everyone uses Moodle, though. Each course has been built using a *modular approach* so they can be customized to suit different organizations, whether they are providing a distance learning course or blended learning for on or off-campus students. The aim is that all of the courseware can be easily re-edited, extended or re-designed by the organization using it. All the course modules have been packaged as **IMS Content Packages** accessible from searching within this [repository](#). All the source files are also available meaning that your own design teams can modify the materials including the Flash objects that use XML feeds ([Source](#))."

Finally, we have to appreciate and congratulate **Richard Wyles** (Project Leader) and his team for facilitating and leading such a wonderful project.

*Are there any major OER Projects going on in **Singapore** or **Malaysia**?*

(If they already exist, I apologize for my ignorance!)

Think Fedora! Think Moodle! Or think other great potential open source systems! Think sharing knowledge and ideas! Think connecting people! Think possibilities! Bingo!

If you need any extra help, I will be willing to provide my humble advice and support :)

Teachers open the door. You  
enter by yourself."

- Chinese Proverb

## 63. GIVING KNOWLEDGE FOR FREE & OER STORIES!

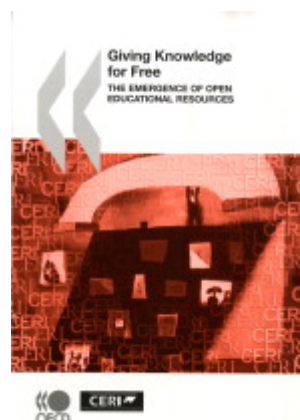
Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/09/giving-knowledge-for-free-oer-stories.html>

ORGANISATION  
FOR ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT



### GIVING KNOWLEDGE FOR FREE?

*"Learning resources are often considered key intellectual property in a competitive higher education world. However, more and more institutions and individuals are sharing their digital learning resources over the Internet, openly and for free, as **Open Educational Resources (OER)**. This study, building on previous OECD work on e-learning, asks why this is happening, who is involved and what the most important implications of this development are.*



The report (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/7/38654317.pdf>) offers a **comprehensive overview of the rapidly changing phenomenon of Open Educational Resources and the challenges it poses for higher education**. It examines reasons for individuals and institutions to share resources for free, and looks at copyright issues, sustainability and business models as well as policy implications. It will be of particular interest to those involved in e-learning or strategic decision making within higher education, to researchers and to students of new technologies [...more](#) "

### OER STORIES

*"Case studies/stories of how institutions and individuals have developed or used OER would be a useful resource for awareness raising activities. Telling stories is a very powerful means of transmitting information. As one Community member (Zaid Ali Alsagoff) expressed it, "**Stories inspire people and bring movements to life.**"*

*If you have developed or used OER and would be willing to share your experience with others then they would like to hear from you [...more](#)"*



Here are the inspirational OER stories shared until now:

- ❑ [BCcampus, Canada](#) (Paul Stacey)
- ❑ [National University of Rwanda, Rwanda](#) (Gerald Rwagasana)
- ❑ [SCOLA pilot, Italy](#) (Giusy Cannella)
- ❑ [Digital Learning Pathway, Italy](#) (Leonardo Tosi)
- ❑ [New Zealand OER Project, New Zealand](#) (Richard Wyles)
- ❑ [Free Courseware Project, University of the Western Cape, South Africa](#) (Philipp Schmidt)
- ❑ [OpenLearn, The Open University, UK](#) (Laura Dewis)
- ❑ [OpenER, Open University of the Netherlands](#) (Robert Schuwer)
- ❑ [OER stories: The Sociatry Project with Harvard University](#) (Eric J. Lindblom PhD)

I do suspect that many more OER stories will be shared in the near future, so please visit the [OER stories site](#) often to get the latest update.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO?

For starters we could for example join the [OER Community](#). Remember, *OER is not only about consuming free knowledge, but also about participating, contributing, sharing, collaborating, networking, promoting, and enhancing the global OER movement.* If one cannot contribute knowledge, one can always be active in promoting and creating awareness to colleagues, institutions and communities. For example, I am using this free blogging tool to also promote OER.

In short, come and join the OER revolution :)

**“We learn by teaching.”**

- James Howell

## 64. OER ARTICLES, REPORTS, SITES AND TOOLS (GETTING DIZZY!)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/oer-articles-reports-sites-tools.html>



### OER

"Free sharing of software, scientific results and educational resources reinforces *societal development and diminishes social inequality*. From a more individual standpoint, open sharing is claimed to increase **publicity**, **reputation** and the **pleasure** of sharing with peers." - [Jan Hysten](#), OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (Also check out [Wikipedia - OER!](#))

### Difference Between Educational Content Accessible for FREE and OER

"A resource accessible for FREE over the Internet does not always signify that it is not protected by a copyright nor forbidden for reuse and reproduction. In fact, most of the time, the content is protected by copyrights not allowing reproduction. Where else an OER is distributed, licensed and shared with the background willingness to enable the user to adapt and use the content freely. Therefore, the model of distribution and the license is always clearly mentioned ([Source: OER Introduction Booklet](#))."





## JUICE

After exploring the OER Introduction Booklet further during the weekend, and a bit of reflection, I realize (don't ask me why!) I want to highlight a few valuable articles, reports, sites, and tools that we can explore further to get a better understanding about ***what OER is, why it is important, how we can use it, and how we can participate and contribute to make a difference***. Most of the OER resources in this list are extracted from Thomas Bekkers' excellent OER Introduction Booklet (Thanks!):

- ❑ [By the International Institute for Educational Planning \(IIEP\): OER Glossary](#)

This Wiki space maintained by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) shares an open glossary of terms that have been used in the IIEP community discussions on Open Educational Resources (OER).

- ❑ [Giving Knowledge for Free: The Emergence of OER](#)

The report offers a comprehensive overview of the rapidly changing phenomenon of Open Educational Resources and the challenges it poses for higher education. It examines reasons for individuals and institutions to share resources for free, and looks at copyright issues, sustainability and business models as well as policy implications. It will be of particular interest to those involved in e-learning or strategic decision making within higher education, to researchers and to students of new technologies [...more](#)

- ❑ [Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Stories](#)

"Case studies/stories of how institutions and individuals have developed or used OER would be a useful resource for awareness raising activities. Telling stories is a very powerful means of transmitting information. As one Community member (Zaid Ali Alsagoff) expressed it, "Stories inspire people and bring movements to life."

- ❑ [A Review of the Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Movement](#) (PDF)

This report examines The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's past investments in Open Educational Resources, the emerging impact and explores future opportunities.

- ❑ [OER and Dissemination of Knowledge In developing Countries](#)

By David Steve Matthe. Why should anyone give away anything for free? Free sharing means broader and faster dissemination, and more people get involved in problem-solving, which means rapid improvement and faster technical and scientific development, and that free-sharing of software, scientific results and educational resources movements re-enforces societal development and diminishes social inequality, etc.



❑ **[Why are Individuals and Institutions Using and Producing OER?](#)**

This excellent paper by Jan Hylen, introduces findings from a recent OECD study. Introductory remarks: "The first and most fundamental question anyone arguing for free and open sharing of software or content has to answer is – why? Why should anyone give away anything for free? What are the possible gains in doing that? Please read :)

❑ **[Getting Started with Reusability? An introduction to Reusability for Digital Learning Resources](#)**

This article, published by the Reusable Learning project, provides an interesting overview about the concept of "reusability" and knowledge transmission from the early age to today's modern societies to finally introduce reusability for digital learning resources and the systems that support them.

❑ **[PRODUCE & REMIX OER: Author and Modify](#)**

This 60-minute tutorial provides information on and practical tasks in creating and modifying open content in an open process formats that can be published as open educational resources and tools, that support this process how to use standards and metadata.

❑ **[OER and practices: a Slide Show with Audio introducing OERs](#)**

This slide show was published on Flickr.com and produced by Leigh Blackall. It includes audio, pictures and an article exploring OERs and practices in a tertiary educational institution.

❑ **[By IIEP: OER Useful Resources](#)**

This list of links to OER initiatives, resources and tools was compiled following the first IIEP discussion forum on Open Educational Resources (24 October - 2 December 2005). It owes a considerable debt to Zaid Ali Alsagoff (That is my name! Cool!), who put together a first list of OER initiatives as an outcome of the forum. Practitioners will find some useful lists of Web sites related to OERs including portals, tools, OER development and publishing initiatives, communities, journals and more.

❑ **[80 OER Tools for Publishing and Development Initiatives](#)**

Arranged in alphabetical order, this list includes 80 online resources that you can use to learn how to build or participate in a collaborative educational effort that focuses on publication and development of those materials.



Also, if you are looking for a massive list of potential learning tools, you might want to check out [UNESCO Free & Open Source Software Portal](#) (Currently 604 tools!). Here are links directly to the major categories:

- ☐ [Communication](#)
- ☐ [Courseware Tools](#)
- ☐ [Development Tools](#)
- ☐ [Operating System](#)
- ☐ [Productivity Tools](#)
- ☐ [Science and Education](#)
- ☐ [Digital Library](#)
- ☐ [Health](#)
- ☐ [Virtual Laboratory](#)

Finally, if you are looking for a list of learning tools that combine commercial, open source, and free stuff, I believe [Jane Knight's directory of 1700+ learning tools](#) (probably more now!) would be of great help (if you got time!).

Oh Man! I am getting dizzy! This post is heavy! As **Stephen Downes** says, "See, here's the thing, though. *I don't want 99 (mind mapping) resources, tools, and tips. I want one. That works. Really well. (Source).*" So, if you ask me to recommend only one learning tool to jump start an OER initiative, I would probably pick [Moodle](#). Hey, don't jump the gun! Why think one! What about your mission, needs, requirements, analysis, bla, bla, bla... Before you know it, nothing really happens! Perhaps, we can learn a few lessons from [New Zealand's ongoing OER project](#) :)

**"Teaching is not rocket science. It is, in fact, far more complex and demanding work than rocket science."**

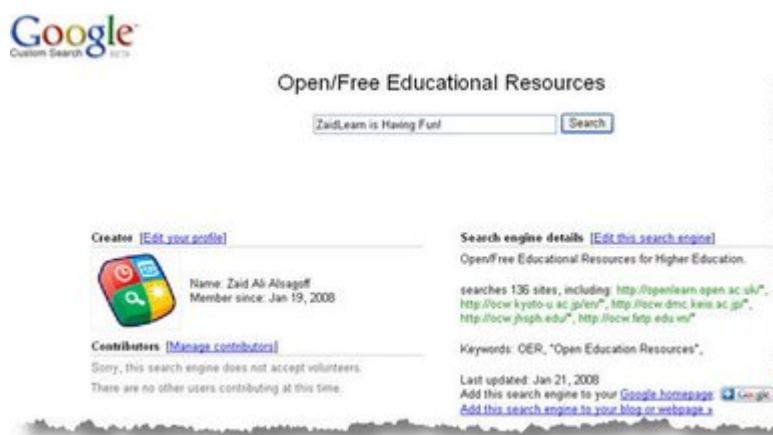
*- Richard F. Elmore*





## 65. GOOGLE CUSTOM SEARCH FOR OPEN/FREE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/01/google-custom-search-for-openfree.html>



*Create a **SEARCH ENGINE** tailored to your needs!*

Do you have a website or collection of sites you'd like to search over? With **Google Custom Search Engine**, you can create a search engine tailored to your needs, which can include one website, multiple websites, or specific webpages. In addition, you can host the search box and results on your own website, and customize the colors and branding to match your existing webpages.

Google Custom Search has both a *FREE version* (I am using this one!) and a Business Edition (Starts at \$100 / year). [Click here](#) to compare the differences.

### OPEN/FREE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Since one of my passions is discovering open or free educational resources for higher education, I have created my own little customized search engine to make my search (and finding) more efficient and effective (I hope!), which currently includes **160+ sites** (OpenCourseWare, Podcasts, Repositories, etc).



[Click here](#) to test my new **Open/Free Educational Resources** customized search engine. Please do not expect 'finding' miracles yet, but I suppose if I really find this tool useful, I will continue to add sites (a specific URLs), and fine tune the results using the 'Refinements' feature, which enables labeling (Can't Google just call it 'Tags'! I suppose they like to be different!) of specific sites or URLs.

Since this tool is so easy-to-learn and use, I believe (unless a better tool comes along! Any suggestions) many other passionate educators around the world will begin (some have!) to create their own little customized search engines. Sooner or later we will find more customized search engines zooming in on all sorts of specific areas, including research, education, psychology, thinking, business, history, science, sports, etc. Oh, if I want to find resources on mathematics I will go here, and if I want to find resources on psychology I go there. What about robotics and teaching and learning, just go there! Yeah, it would be cool to have **one mega search space** with links (or checkboxes) to open/free educational resources, enabling us conveniently from one 'search box' to select what we want to search (e.g. Only resources on 'critical thinking'). If someone is creating something like that, I would love to participate!

Google seems to have found an answer to their increasingly **garbage diluted generic search** (according to my poor opinion!), and realized that we humans can play an effective role using our collective filtering intelligence to improve their search results. Google serves us with useful and easy-to-use tools, and we indirectly serve Google back (can even get paid!) by improving their search results. For a short period, I thought that Google was increasingly becoming an 'Imitator' like Microsoft. Perhaps I am wrong!

## OTHER EXAMPLES

Here are a few other customized Google search engines you might want to explore:

- ❑ [Edublogs Custom Search](#) - Stephen Downes has created a customized search on Education weblogs and related sites (Currently 456 sites).



- ❑ [CS Curriculum Search](#) - Helps you find teaching materials that have been published to the web by faculty from Computer Science (CS) departments around the world.
- ❑ [OpenDOAR](#) - OpenDoar, a UK-based registry for open-access repositories has created a Custom Search Engine with their registrants' sites.
- ❑ [Real Climate](#) - Provides expert opinions on the science of climate change.
- ❑ [Green Maven](#) - This search engine emphasizes websites with Green and Social Values, as approved by a team of Green MBA editors.
- ❑ [Econ Search Engine](#) - Search the contents of some 10,000 economics web sites.

[Click here](#) to view more examples.

WOW! Why don't you also perhaps explore this tool and create your own customized search engine for something that really interests you? I suppose I will be busy continuing to explore and enhance my own little [Open/Free Educational Resources Search Engine](#) :)

*"I cannot teach anybody anything, I  
can only make them think."*

*- Socrates*

## 66. 60+ KILLER OCW COLLECTIONS FOR WEB DESIGNERS (JESSICA HUPP)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/02/60-killer-ocw-collections-for-web.html>



### 2ND GENERATION OCW COLLECTIONS

**Stephen Carson** (in his super [OpenFiction blog](#)!) talks about a 2nd generation type of OCW (OpenCourseWare) collection, which assembles a list of courses from various university OCWs into a curriculum. And then he shares with us a great example...

### OCW COLLECTION FOR WEB DESIGNERS

**Jessica Hupp** has managed to compile and organize an amazing collection of OCW for web designers. [Click here](#) to enjoy more than 60 OCW, covering everything from design theory to Internet culture!

Here are a few gems that caught my attention:

- ❑ [Information Visualization](#): Consider space, order, focus, context, and more in this course. [University of British Columbia]
- ❑ [Art of Color](#): In this course, you'll learn the basic principles of color in visual arts. [MIT]



- ❑ [Algorithms for Computer Animation](#): Learn about the algorithms that make animations possible. [MIT]
- ❑ [People-Centered Design](#): Consider how you can design for people with this course. [The Open University]
- ❑ [Social Visualization](#): In this course, you'll learn how to visualize people and their interactions. [MIT]
- ❑ [Common Sense Reasoning for Interactive Application](#): Use this course to discover how you can use common sense knowledge in your design. [MIT]
- ❑ [Networking Infrastructure for E-Commerce](#): Learn about the capabilities and limitations you'll have to work with in e-commerce. [NC State]
- ❑ [Communicating in Cyberspace](#): Take a look at digital communication with this course. [MIT]
- ❑ [The Anthropology of Computing](#): Consider computers as meaningful tools for society and culture in this course. [MIT]
- ❑ [The Future of the Internet](#): You'll learn about Internet architecture as well as current issues like network neutrality. [Stanford]
- ❑ [Foundations of American Cyber-Culture](#): Consider new media, demographics, open source, and lots more in this course. [Berkeley]
- ❑ [Web 2.0](#): Get a good look at web 2.0 as it relates to users, online business models, and new technologies. [Weber State University]
- ❑ [A New Era?](#): This course takes on the new economy and innovation. [The Open University]
- ❑ [Search Engines: Technology, Society and Business](#): Get an introduction to search engines, intellectual property in searches, advertising, spam, and more. [Berkeley]

Please, check out the rest if you have time! It is simply an amazing list of web design related courses. Coming to think of it, if you actually study all these courses, you should be certified with a Masters of Web Design (Certificate of Attendance!).

### 3RD GENERATION OCW COLLECTIONS

A 3rd generation type of OCW collection, assembles a list of individual learning resources (e.g. audio/video lectures) for a **specific course** (outline) from various OCWs around the world (We used to call it 'Learning Objects' or 'LO', but I am not sure if this buzz word is dead!). Basically, lecturers (and students) explore, discover, collect and assemble what they consider to be the best learning resources found in OCW (or OER) collections around the world related to the negotiated



course outline. The challenge will be to filter (resource overload!) and tailor (remix, mashup, synthesize, adapt, etc.) the assembled learning resources to the learners.

Lecturers still create certain portions of the course (missing links!), but their role is also to connect learners to great learning resources and people easily available (Isn't that how it was done in the old days? Though, a bit tougher without the computer, Internet, Browser and Google!). Also, lecturers should have the expertise to filter the good from the bad and nasty! ***If something is really great and available for free, why not use it to facilitate the learning process*** (Don't hide it!)! The bottom-line is not our ego or content ownership, but to ensure that learners have access to the best possible learning resources available. I am pretty sure that there are lecturers out there that are already creating amazing 3rd generation OCW collections for their courses. Now, are you doing it? Hmm, am I doing it?

With an open mind to OCW and OER collections, we can create and facilitate really ***amazing learning environments which are filled with great learning resources, engaging discussions and a lot of relevant and dynamic learning activities***. Think *sharing!* Think *collaborating!* Think *networking!* Think *connecting!* Think *learning!* Think *possibilities* :)

“Good teaching is more a giving of right questions than a giving of right answers.”

- Josef Albers

GALAXY 6: FREE EDUGAMES







## 67. 75 FREE EDUGAMES TO SPICE UP YOUR COURSE!

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2008/05/75-free-edugames-to-spice-up-your.html>

***"Engage Me or Enrage Me"***

- [Marc Prensky \(2005\)](#)

***"Never play a video game that's trying to teach you something."***

- [Justin Peters \(2007\)](#)

Terms like [educational games](#), [game-based gaming](#), and [social impact games](#) don't sound too bad. But, [Serious Games](#) sounds awful! I mean, who wants to get serious about playing games (I want to relax and have some fun!). The name itself is capable of killing the joy of playing games before even wanting to. I suppose some innovative name rebranding could help to facilitate and globalize the idea of using games to facilitate the (formal) learning process. Though, I think the term '[Edutainment](#)' is quite good. My favorite would probably be **EduGames**. But, I believe we have yet to discover an attractive term for educational gaming that reach the 'Yummy' factor.

Anyway, this post is not about attacking or supporting the idea of EduGames to facilitate Higher Learning. There are tons of articles out there (Google it!) talking about the potential of EduGames (e.g. [Game-Based Learning: How to Delight and Instruct in the 21st Century](#) - Joel Foreman). Although many articles and papers talk about EduGames, they often don't include a comprehensive directory or list of juicy free EduGames. So, this post will skip all the theoretical Mambo-Jumbo, and link you right to the juice (that I have managed to discover!).

In short, this article (or post) is about exploring and discovering free educational games that could be useful to embed within or across courses (and programs) to spark more engagement, challenge, mystery, exploration, collaboration, problem-solving, decision making, imagination, fun and thinking into the learning process.



## EDUGAMES SITES

But, before we explore 75 EduGames! Here are a few online resources that you might want to explore first (Macro-level):

- ❑ [Educational Games Research](#)  
Research and discussion concerning instructional video games.
- ❑ [Serious Games Initiative](#)  
Is focused on uses for games in exploring management and leadership challenges facing the public sector.
- ❑ [Serious Games](#)  
A web portal to serious games news, resources and companies. Its secondary goal is to enable networking between anyone with an interest in serious games.
- ❑ [Social Impact Games](#)  
It is designed as a community resource for all those interested in games with non-entertainment goals. You can find more than 200 educational games here (free, commercial, coming soon, etc).
- ❑ [The Education Arcade](#)  
Represents a consortium of international game designers, publishers, scholars, educators, and policy makers who are exploring the new frontiers of educational media that have been opened by computer and video games.
- ❑ [26 Learning Games to Change the World](#)  
A great post by Jeff Cobb about 26 educational games out there that are geared towards making a difference in the world.
- ❑ [The Top 10 Free Educational Video Games](#)  
Check it out! If you find the list below overwhelming and stressful, this list is simply wonderful!

## 75 FREE EDUGAMES!

Initially, I wanted to compile an EduGame list, which included metadata, categories, chunking, screenshots, and tags. But, then I kind of realized it would require a lot more work from me, and less thinking and effort from you to find something useful. In other words, it would minimize the challenge and discovery aspect of finding what you want in the list (if there!). It would take away the challenge and might even hinder you from finding what you are looking for (especially, if my categorization and tagging is poor!). Yes, it would take away the game play challenge of mystery, suspense, joy, exploration, fun and incidental learning. "WHATEVER! Just get on with it!"



Here are **75 FREE EduGames** (including 3 interesting tools at the end) that sounds and looks interesting for Higher Education (Haven't tried all yet!):

1. [Gwap](#)

When you play a game at Gwap (e.g. ESP Game), you aren't just having fun. You're helping the world become a better place. By playing their games, you're training computers to solve problems for humans all over the world.

2. [WFP Foodforce](#)

Understand world hunger and efforts to alleviate it.

3. [Virtual U](#)

Is a management education game, a simulation of a university, in which the user takes the role of a university administrator. It is designed to foster better understanding of management practices in American colleges and universities.

4. [Revolution](#)

Experience historical incentives for the American Revolution from the grassroots level.

5. [Discover Babylon](#)

Uses sophisticated video gaming strategies and realistic digital environments to engage the learner in challenges and mysteries that can only be solved through developing an understanding of Mesopotamian society, business practices, and trade.

6. [FreeCol](#)

Is a turn-based strategy game based on the old game Colonization, and similar to Civilization. The objective of the game is to create an independent nation.

7. [FreeCiv](#)

Is a Free and Open Source empire-building strategy game inspired by the history of human civilization. The game commences in prehistory and your mission is to lead your tribe from the stone age to the space age.

8. [Tropical America](#)

A journey to unravel the mysteries of the Americas. Developed in collaboration with Los Angeles artists, teachers, writers and high school students, the game features a bilingual, thematic game play, accompanied by an online database of edu-resources.

9. [Ayiti - The Cost of Life](#)

What is it like to live in poverty? Find out now in this challenging role playing game in which you take responsibility for a family of five in rural Haiti. From UNICEF with Microsoft support.



10. [EyeWitness](#)

Is an Interactive Situation Simulation Software (ISSS) that let users experience the 1937 Nanking Massacre personally, when over the course of 6 weeks, over 300,000 civilians were killed by Japanese troops invading the city.

11. [The History Canada Game](#)

Understand social forces surrounding Canadian history since 1534. Modification of Civilization III

12. [Road to Revolution Game](#)

Test your knowledge about the American Revolution, and see if you can navigate your way to independence. Every correct answer gets you closer to liberty!

13. [Conflict Map](#)

In the course of the 20th century, mankind experienced some of the most devastating wars of all times. Where, what, How, When, Why? This map gives you the opportunity to answer these questions. It displays wars with at least 1,000 military battle deaths.

14. [Prisoners of War](#)

Can people behave as they like during times of war? No, they can't. The Geneva Conventions of written rules and articles make some acts unlawful. Play the prisoners of war game to learn more.

15. [The Peace Doves](#)

Take on the mission to disarm the world of nuclear weapons! You have eight "Peace Doves" to help you, each able to disarm one of the eight countries possessing nuclear weapons.

16. [America's Army](#)

Players are bound by Rules of Engagement (ROE) and grow in experience as they navigate challenges emphasizing team play, loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

17. [Stop Disasters](#)

The online game aims at teaching people on how to build safer villages and cities against disasters. Multiple languages. Good teacher resources.

18. [World Without Oil](#)

An alternate reality event, a serious game for the public good. It invites everyone to help simulate a global oil shock. People participate by contributing original online stories, created as though the oil shock were really happening.



19. [Real Life Simulations](#)

That let you experience life as, for example, a peasant farmer in Bangladesh, a factory worker in Brazil, a policeman in Nigeria, a lawyer in the US, or a computer operator in Poland, among others.

20. [3rd World Farmer](#)

It aims at simulating the real-world mechanisms that cause and sustain poverty in 3rd World countries. In the game, the player gets to manage an African farm, and is soon confronted with the often difficult choices that poverty and conflict necessitate.

21. [Trade Ruler](#)

Bertil Ohlin, awarded the Prize in Economics in 1977, showed that countries engage in and benefit from trade if their production resources differ from each other. Play the Trade Ruler game to learn more.

22. [Wasteland Adventure](#)

Time: 3010 AD. After humans destroyed the ecosystem. The earth lost the ability to heal and the environment continues to get worse. The fresh air and clean water are polluted. Just play the game!!!

23. [Climate Challenge](#)

A game where you are president of the European Nations. You must tackle climate change and stay popular enough with the voters to remain in office.

24. [Global Warming Interactive](#)

Is a web based multi-user educational game which explores the relationship of global warming to economic, political and science policy decisions (intended for the high school user).

25. [Quest Atlantis](#)

Help students understand social studies, environmental concerns, current events, and scientific standards.

26. [FreeRice](#)

A cool game to learn vocabulary and help end world hunger by providing rice to hungry people for free (Made possible by the sponsors who advertise on the site).

27. [Anagramarama](#)

The aim of the game is to find as many words as possible in the time available. Get the longest word and you'll advance to the next level.

28. [Re-Mission](#)

Understand cancer better and develop a positive attitude toward defeating it.



29. [The POD Game](#)

Dispense drugs and medical advice to people during an emergency. Using this game, you can enhance your efforts to teach staff and volunteers to work efficiently and sensitively with the public to maximize throughput in times of crisis.

30. [Deliver The Net Game](#)

Race the sun and hand out as many insecticide-treated bed nets as you can to African families. The more nets you deliver – before the mosquitoes come out – the more lives you save.

31. [Immune Attack](#)

An educational video game that introduces basic concepts of human immunology to high school and entry-level college students. It aims to excite students about the subject, while also illuminating general principles and detailed concepts of immunology.

32. [The Immune System Defender](#)

Ilya Mechnikov, inserted a thorn into a larva and noticed strange cells gathering around the thorn. The cells were eating any foreign substances entering the ruptured skin (devouring cells). Play the game to learn more!

33. [Whack TB \(Tuberculosis\)](#)

There are almost 9 million new cases of TB each year; about 500,000 of these cases are resistant to the best TB drugs available to fight them. Play this game and learn more about fighting TB!" From the Families USA Global Health Initiative.

34. [Blood Typing](#)

In this game you have to blood type each patient and give them a blood transfusion.

35. [Virtual Hip Surgery - Total Hip Replacement Surgery](#)

Take on the role of the Surgeon throughout a hip replacement surgery!

36. [Virtual Knee Surgery - Total Knee Replacement](#)

Take on the role of the Surgeon throughout a total knee replacement surgery.

37. [The Ear Pages](#)

Sound is caused by changes of pressure in the air that is transformed into nerve impulses in the inner ear. Explore "The Ear Pages" and collect the snail shaped symbols to gain points in the quiz!

38. [The Incredible Adventures of the Amazing Food Detective](#)

There has been a mysterious outbreak of unhealthy habits among kids, and we need to solve these cases. All junior food detectives will get secret training on how to eat right and exercise. Have fun playing the game!



39. [\*\*The Food Detectives Fight BAC!\*\*](#)

The game gives kids a fun way to learn about foodborne illness. From New Mexico State University.

40. [\*\*Fatworld\*\*](#)

A video game about the politics of nutrition. It explores the relationships between obesity, nutrition, and socioeconomics in the contemporary U.S.

41. [\*\*WaterBusters!\*\*](#)

A game to teach tips for water conservation around the home.

42. [\*\*NitroGenius\*\*](#)

Is a multi-player, multi-stakeholder game about solving nitrogen problems. A free single-player (demo) version is available.

43. [\*\*Binary Game \(Cisco\)\*\*](#)

The game teaches strategies related to the binary system, a foundation knowledge used by CCNAs to install, configure and operate networks.

44. [\*\*Plan Your Future Park!\*\*](#)

You get to plan your future New York City park, making choices that communities all over the city have been making.

45. [\*\*The Conductive Valley\*\*](#)

We have been taught that plastics, unlike metals, do not conduct electricity. However, plastic can, after certain modifications, be made electrically conductive. Play the game to learn more.

46. [\*\*Chirality\*\*](#)

Chiral molecules can be used to control or speed up different chemical reactions. In this game you can learn the basic principles of chirality.

47. [\*\*Invar & Steel Alloys\*\*](#)

Steel, brass and amalgam are a few examples of an alloy. Invar, from the word "invariable", is a special steel alloy - used today in toasters and CRT-monitors for example. Play the game to learn more.

48. [\*\*Heating Plastics\*\*](#)

There are two major groups of plastics - some melt when heated and others don't. Find out why by playing the Heating Plastics Game.

49. [\*\*The Recycler \(Transistors\)\*\*](#)





Shockley, Bardeen and Brattain, the men behind the transistor, were awarded the 1956 Nobel Prize in Physics. Today, transistors are found in virtually every electronic device. Play the recycling game to learn more.

50. [The Laser Challenge](#)

Laser is used in many areas, such as research, communication, industry, medicine, and environmental care. Learn more about the laser by playing this game.

51. [Fold It - Solve Puzzles for Science](#)

Is a computer game enabling you to contribute to important scientific research. Foldit uses spare computer time, via a screensaver, to work out how proteins fold. Players use their computers to fold proteins.

52. [Lord of the Flies](#)

The game is supposed to be played after one has read the book "Lord of the Flies" by William Golding. The aim is to introduce some basic analytical aspects concerning the book and to challenge the reader's memory through play.

53. [Find the Authors](#)

Among hundreds of letters, the names of Literature Laureates are hidden. Pick a period and search for the authors mentioned on the list beside the puzzle. The names may be written in all directions.

54. [Arden - World of William Shakespeare](#)

Attain an appreciation of Shakespearean authorship and Elizabethan England. Modification of Neverwinter Nights Diamond.

55. [Globulation2](#)

Is an innovative Real-Time Strategy (RTS) game which reduces micro-management by automatically assigning tasks to units.

56. [Crash Scene Investigation](#)

Help the highway patrol recreate a deadly crash by examining the evidence and calculating the forces. Use trigonometry, physics, and geometry to figure out what happened at an auto crash scene.

57. [Airport Security](#)

You're an airport screener. Can you correctly identify risky items hidden in baggage? Uses actual X-ray images of dangerous devices.

58. [Bricks or Clicks](#)

You are put in the role of CEO at a traditional toy manufacturer. The company, called ToyBlocks Co., must confront the challenges of launching an online sales channel while managing and maintaining their current traditional sales channels.



59. [Harpooned](#)

Harpooned is a free game for Windows. It is a Cetacean Research Simulator, where you play the role of a Japanese scientist performing research on whales around Antarctica.

60. [Stop Whaling Game](#)

Steer the Greenpeace inflatable boat around the seas and intercept the dangerous harpoons from the whaling ship. To make the whaling ship stop whaling, you must try and get your activists on board the whaling ship.

61. [WolfQuest](#)

Learn about wolf ecology by living the life of a wild wolf in Yellowstone National Park. Play alone or with friends in on-line multiplayer missions, explore the wilderness, hunt elk, and encounter stranger wolves in your quest to find a mate.

62. [McDonald's Video Game](#)

You'll discover in this game all the dirty secrets that made McDonald's one of the biggest companies of the world. Interesting stuff man! Multiple languages. Offline version available.

63. [Corporate Greed](#)

A 3-minute mini-game about the corporate executives accused and/or convicted of greed-related crimes.

64. [Better Business Games](#)

A basic in-box simulation game from British Telecom about managing social and environmental issues in a business. The player takes on the role of corporate CEO. The games contents are drawn from general business dilemmas across all industries.

65. [Karma Tycoon](#)

Is a free Online RPG that rocks the gaming world by offering you a thrilling ride through the world of social entrepreneurship as you earn Karma in virtual communities across the US. Teachers' curriculum available.

66. [Googolopoly](#)

The goal of the game, produced by Box.net, is to use Google shares to buy as many properties as you can without landing in the deadpool and losing your stock. You can download the game in its entirety as a PDF.

67. [SimCity](#)

Understand variable manipulations for urban management while having fun building a simulated city.

68. [Virtual Trader - Investment Game \(UK\)](#)



Virtual Trader is a free Investment Simulation Game, offering its users the opportunity to gain practical experience trading stocks under real market conditions (London Stock Exchange), against their actual and current prices.

69. [INNOV8 - Business Process Management \(BPM\) Simulator](#)

Innov8 is a FREE interactive 3D business simulator (Registration required), which takes participants through the entire lifecycle of discovery, collaboration, optimization, and innovation of a fictional company's business processes.

70. [eLECTIONS - Your Adventure in Politics](#)

Inspired by the classic board game "The Game of Life," players will role-play their own virtual candidates running for President.

71. [My US Rep - Role Play Congress!](#)

This game enables you to play your favorite (or not so) House of Representative and help them become more popular! Based on real voting data, My US Rep allows you to discover your Rep's hopes and dreams within an engaging game experience.

72. [Whyville](#)

Provide a student-centered, hands-on environment for exploring various school subjects.

73. [Hot Potatoes](#)

The Hot Potatoes suite includes six applications, enabling you to create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises.

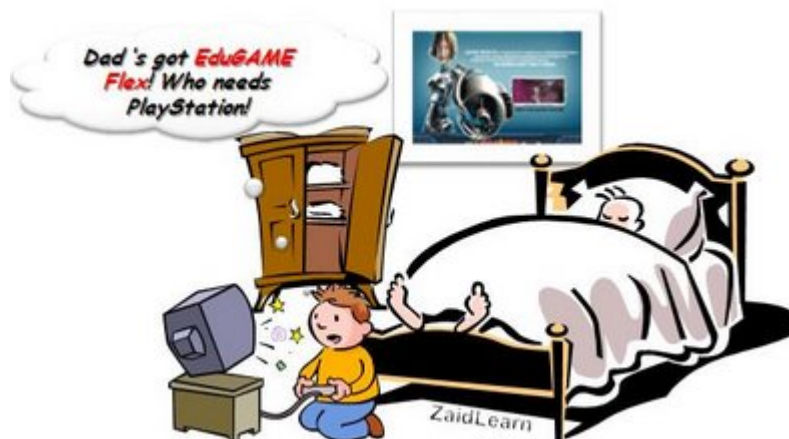
74. [iQuizShow](#)

Is based on the popular "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" TV game show. You can customize the questions to what you want. It is written in Java , and can run on any platform that supports Java.

75. [ClassTools.net](#)

Create your own free educational games, activities and diagrams in a Flash! Host them on your own blog, website or intranet!

"Oh man, I don't even have time to try one (or even read this list!), and now you give me 75. Come on!" Who said you need to try out or read this list. Just share it (the URL) with your students, and tell them the kind of game you might want for your course (Challenge), and let them individually or in groups **explore, discover, reflect, select and write a recommendation report**. In short, this EduGames list could be a good starting point to start the EduGame discovery journey.



If you are looking for a list that will actually grow (as I discover), please go here: [GAMES GALORE](#).

This post is dead and buried (for now!), but my [del.icio.us adventure](#) will continue. Finally, please don't take EduGames too seriously, don't get addicted, but have fun playing them while learning :)

"A teacher who is attempting to teach without inspiring the pupil with a desire to learn is hammering on a cold iron."

- Horace Mann

## 68. INNOVA8 – AN INTERACTIVE 3-D BUSINESS SIMULATOR (IBM)

Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/11/innov8-interactive-3-d-business.html>



### WHAT?

Innov8 (<http://www-306.ibm.com/software/solutions/soa/innov8.html>) is a **FREE interactive 3D business simulator** (Free of charge to universities at least. Registration required!), which takes participants through the entire lifecycle of discovery, collaboration, optimization, and innovation of a fictional company's business processes. It is designed to teach the fundamentals of Business Process Management (BPM) and bridge the gap in understanding between business leaders and IT teams in an organization.

### JUICE

I have yet had the time to really test it, but according to my readings (and watching a couple of YouTube videos about it. URLs above!), the 3D business simulator allows you to virtually participate in a BPM project derived from IBM's real world experiences. You can play the game on your laptop or personal computer, and *no Internet connection is required* (provided you have the installation media already). The game consists of three (3) major stages (or levels):

- ☐ **Level 1:** Process discovery and process modeling
- ☐ **Level 2:** Collaboration driven simulation and iterative process improvement
- ☐ **Level 3:** Real-time business management



Based on my understanding (might be wrong here!), you have to register and become a member of the [IBM Academic Initiative](#) (an innovative global program to collaborate with educators in teaching students) to **gain FREE access** to this 3D business simulator and related resources including courseware, training, teaching tools, books, and more. **Membership** is open to faculty members and researcher professionals at accredited institutions of learning, all over the globe. Before making up your mind about educational gaming and simulations, here are some interesting facts worth thinking about ([Source](#)):

- ❑ Since November 6, over 2,000 universities around the world can download the game from IBM's website and begin using it in their classrooms.
- ❑ According The Apply Group, a research firm, by **2012**, between 100 and 135 of the Global Fortune 500 will have adopted gaming for learning, with the US, UK and Germany leading the way.
- ❑ 75 percent of CEOs surveyed by IBM cited education and the lack of qualified candidates as the issues that will have the greatest impact on their business over the next three years.
- ❑ 56 percent of IBM clients feel that not having the right blend of business and IT skills is their biggest problem.

Universities that are already participating in IBM's Innov8 pilot program, include:

- ❑ **Harvard University** - Harvard Business School



- ☐ Duke University - Fuqua School of Business
- ☐ Beijing Institute of Technology (China)
- ☐ Carnegie Mellon University- Heinz School of Public Policy and Management
- ☐ SDA Bocconi (Italy) – Bocconi School of Management
- ☐ University of Manchester (UK) - Manchester Business School
- ☐ University of Technology, Sydney (Australia)
- ☐ Waseda University (Japan) – IT Specialist Program

Are there any Universities from **Malaysia** or **Singapore** participating?

Interestingly, there are no weapons in INNOV8 other than sharp wits. So, no, you cannot take drastic actions like shooting your way out of trouble. Have fun being able to fail your innovate business project without any major consequences, except mental stress (and perhaps some physical stress). Finally, let's hope that IBM makes this interactive 3D Business Simulator easier to access with one simple click, '**Download**' (No registration required!) :)

“One must learn by doing the thing; for though you think you know it, you have no certainty, until you try.”

- Sophocles



## 69. CLASSTOOLS.NET (CREATE EDUCATIONAL FLASH GAMES ON-THE-FLY)

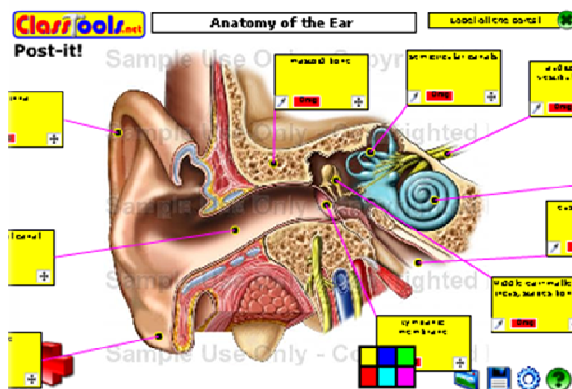
Article URL: <http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/2007/08/classtoolsnet-create-educational-flash.html>



**"Create educational games, activities and diagrams in a Flash!** Host them on your own blog, website or intranet! **ClassTools.net** (<http://www.classtools.net/>) is a **FREE** website allowing teachers and students to create interactive Flash diagrams for learning and revising material."

### Learning while having fun Playing Games!

This is an online educational game creator that you can have a lot of fun with developing interactive games, activities and diagrams on-the-fly for your students (or friends). Currently, it has around 15 different templates to play around with, but I won't be surprised if this number is increased into a triple digit soon (it also invites others to share



templates with them). ClassTools.net is a really easy-to-learn and use educational game creator, and now it even enables you to create links to your games direct from your blog or website. Although, some of the templates perhaps need a face lift, it is certainly a great start and it is free (for crying out loud!). Here is an example created by Lauren Eno (Thanks in advance for sharing!).

Have fun creating Flash-based educational games without requiring a programmer or a graphic designer :)

**THAT'S ALL FOLKS!**

For more learning adventures, please visit:

<http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/>

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<http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/>



## CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about the articles or learning nuggets in this ebook, or are interested in discussing or collaborating on anything related to learning, please contact me anytime.



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Zaid Ali Alsagoff is currently (Aug 2008) the e-Learning Manager at INCEIF. He has eight-years of hands-on experience with e-learning in higher education. He has done research in several key e-learning areas, including educational gaming, role-play simulation, virtual classrooms, learning (content) management systems, e-learning standards, instructional design and courseware development. In addition, he has two (2) years experience in courseware development (as an Instructional Designer), and an educational background in Psychology and IT management.

Yes, Zaid Ali Alsagoff is the *author, editor, graphic designer, instructional designer, and publisher of this ebook.*



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IS POWER!**

“Seek knowledge  
from the  
cradle to the  
grave.”

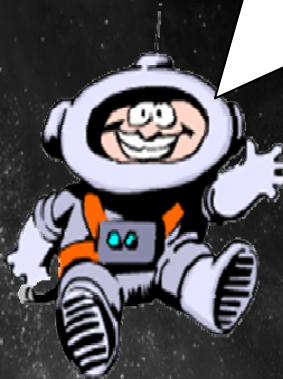
- Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)



Zaid Ali Alsagoff



*I AM STILL  
LEARNING!*



**Coming Soon!**

<http://zaidlearn.blogspot.com/>